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LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
THE FIRST EARL OF DURHAM

VOL. I.

Yours sincerely
Durham

I[illegible] AND LETTERS
OF THE FIRST EARL OF DURHAM

VOL. I.

Yours very truly
Durham

LIFE AND LETTERS OF THE FIRST EARL OF DURHAM

1792—1840

BY

STUART J. REID

AUTHOR OF 'THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SYDNEY SMITH'
'LORD JOHN RUSSELL' ETC.

'Le jour viendra'
Motto of the Lambtons

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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TO

JOHN GEORGE LAMBTON

THIRD EARL OF DURHAM

GRANDSON AND NAMESAKE OF THE STATESMAN

WHOSE CHARACTER AND WORK

ARE HERE RECORDED THIS BOOK IS

DEDICATED

PREFACE

If ever the old saying that brevity is the soul of wit seems applicable, it is when a man sits down to explain, if not the scope of, at least the reason for, the task he has undertaken. A biography is like a building: it either makes, or fails to make, its own appeal. The author, like the architect, need not concern himself greatly about taking the world into his confidence over the difficulties which confronted him, or the considerations which determined his choice of materials. In both undertakings there are a thousand points, both small and great, to settle, too tedious to state and of small consequence when the work is finished. For the rest, a preface, like a porch, ought not to be out of scale. In the building of a book, even before the scaffolding is taken down and public judgment is pronounced, a man has reason to know that the work might be better, yet, after all, the most that any one can claim is that he has tried to do his best.

Whatever verdict prevails in regard to this book, I cannot urge—what is always an unsatisfactory plea—that it has been hastily written. For more years than I care to recall, it has been the dream of my life to try, as far as lay in my power, to do justice to the character and work of Lord Durham. It seems strange, in view of the attractive qualities of the man, and the memorable part which he played at more than one great crisis in the political annals of the nation, that such an opportunity should have fallen to me. But the fact remains that no biography of him has ever been written, though

he died as far back as the beginning of the Victorian Era, and was never more prominently before the world than in the closing years of his short but strenuous life. It is true that a little volume, consisting almost exclusively of Lord Durham's earlier political speeches, was printed in his own lifetime. It was compiled, as well as published, as far back as 1835, by a Glasgow bookseller—who, oddly enough, bore the same surname as myself—just after the famous Durham Festival in Scotland. A packet of old letters from the pen of the first Earl lie before me that reveal the blunders into which, in spite of his hero-worship, the author of this slight, passing tribute stumbled in the laudable attempt to pay homage to the stranger within the gates of the city when William IV. was king.

The reputation of no public man in England in the Nineteenth Century has suffered more undeserved neglect than that of Lord Durham; indeed, until recent years saw the nation confronted in South Africa, under different conditions, with a similar problem to that which he solved in Canada in 1838–9, it was the fashion to ignore the splendid achievements of his public career. This arose, in part, because the materials for a full and accurate estimate, not merely of one phase, but of his whole life, were not available; and in part because picturesque gossip of a censorious kind had been allowed during sixty years of silence to pass unchallenged and, in consequence, to harden into accepted fact. People spoke and wrote of Lord Durham as if he were merely a petulant, gainsaying person, of undeniable gifts but autocratic temper, who thwarted his father-in-law, Lord Grey, and other of the Whig leaders, and, in the end, went to Canada and wrecked his own career by blazing indiscretions. The object of this book is to reveal how much Lord Durham accomplished long before the final and tragic phase of his career, as well

as to point out the obstacles which were thrown in his way in those last days of splendid, crowded life. I have endeavoured to show the nature and extent of his achievements for the Empire, the greatness of the task that he accomplished, in spite of the obloquy which in life was his only reward. It is a truism that only the 'trees which bear fruit are pelted with stones,' and no more conspicuous example could readily be cited than that of the statesman whose career is traced in these pages.

It is possible to place too much stress on Lord Durham in Canada, and to ignore his distinguished services to the Crown and the people in the earlier stages of a career, which, from first to last, was marked by memorable work in other directions. After all, Canada represents merely the culmination—his enemies may call it, if they will, the collapse—of a great career. Only the other day Sir William Butler, speaking on the problem of Government in South Africa, declared that though Lord Durham's authority lasted but a few months, he did more 'in the making of Canada—in laying the foundation of the present state of prosperity and happiness—than had been achieved by all the Governors and Governments of seventy years before him.' That is a bold saying, but I think—not in the light of anything I have to say, but in that of the authentic contemporary evidence, printed for the first time in these pages—the majority of those who read this book will not consider that Sir William Butler's generous words are beside the mark.

It is not possible to thank by name in the space that remains all who have given me help in the preparation of this book. Some of them, alas, are beyond the reach of thanks, though I cannot refrain from mentioning a few of them. My first duty is to acknowledge the gracious permission of his Majesty the King for

authority to use certain letters from Queen Victoria to the Countess of Durham, which, though slight in themselves, throw into passing relief the relations both of Lord and Lady Durham with the Court. Next must stand the acknowledgment of my indebtedness to the Earl of Durham for placing all the family and political papers at Lambton Castle at my disposal, unfettered by any conditions, as well as for constant encouragement, and valuable suggestions in the course of my work. It is no idle compliment to say that without Lord Durham's unfailing interest this book would never have been written. I have also to thank the Dowager Lady Morton, the only survivor of the first Earl's children, and his granddaughter the Duchess of Leeds for giving me hints and incidents of a kind impossible outside the family circle.

I wish to express my obligations to Lady Dorchester for permission to print for the first time some verses by Lord Byron, which somehow had remained for the lifetime of two generations hidden in manuscript in the privacy of Lady Durham's album. I hold in grateful memory the late Earl Cowper, who gave me permission to print such letters of Lord Melbourne as were preserved at Lambton Castle, and also my personal friend, the late Earl of Bessborough, for giving me access to the papers of his brother, Lord Durham's son-in-law. My acknowledgments are also due to the late Hon. George Elliot, brother-in-law of the late Earl Russell, for leave to cite certain letters of that statesman. I wish to thank Earl Grey for the use of intimate letters of the second Earl preserved at Howick; and the Earl of Lytton for similar leave to quote from Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton, and his brother, Lord Dalling. I am indebted also to General Sir Redvers Buller—through Lady Burghclere—for free use of important documents of his kinsman Charles Buller—Lord Durham's most

able and trusty lieutenant in Canada. I desire further to acknowledge the kindness of Madame Belloc in placing at my disposal the letters which her father, Joseph Parkes—one of Lord Durham's intimate friends —wrote to him during a term of eventful years. I am afraid all this by no means spells the full extent of my obligations; I hope, if I have unwittingly omitted others, in such a connection, they will pardon what, I need scarcely say, is an unintentional oversight.

No man was more conversant with the stormy political annals of the North of England in the early decades of last century than the late Joseph Cowen, M.P., who, like his father before him, represented, for a long term of years, Newcastle-on-Tyne in the House of Commons. He gave me some slight, but valuable information — gathered chiefly from the lips of his father, who knew Lord Durham personally in the days when he was renowned on Tyneside as 'Radical Jack.' It may be of interest to add that Joseph Cowen the younger told me that, in undertaking to write the biography of Lord Durham, I was unconsciously fulfilling one of the baffled desires of his own life.

Years ago I visited Canada and examined the archives at Ottawa—a task in which I was helped by Dr. Alpheus Todd, then Librarian to the Dominion Parliament, and Dr. Douglas Brymner, Architect to the Canadian Government. I also took the opportunity, when in Quebec, to turn over the files of many old newspapers, and to examine not a few historical books and papers. I met several public men who remembered Lord Durham, and caught, so to speak, the last words of a vanishing generation on his Mission. I must here record my indebtedness to Sir James Le Moine, of Quebec, who, when I was in that historic city, placed me in possession of valuable clues to the

interpretation of Lord Durham's relations with the French Canadians.

Lord Strathcona, a man whose services to the Empire need no praise, is a living link between the small, turbulent Canada of Lord Durham, and the vast and contented Dominion of to-day. One is glad to associate, even in passing, two such names. Lord Strathcona told me that he remembered seeing Lord Durham in 1838, and added that he was rebuked by his master because, when the Governor-General drove up with his suite to inspect some public works—the Welland Canal, I think—surprised at such splendour, he neglected to doff his cap. If Lord Durham could have foreseen Lord Strathcona's services to Canada, he would have clasped hands—there and then—with the sturdy young Scot. One member of Lord Durham's suite in Canada I knew personally, the late Edward Pleydell Bouverie, who gave me some vivid recollections of his old chief, as also did the late General Sir Daniel Lysons, who was a young officer in the Guards quartered with his regiment at Quebec when the 'Dictator' was Governor-General.

The late Dr. Richard Garnett—the friend and helper, without stint, of all literary workers—was good enough to look over a few pages of this book. Finally, I wish to thank Sir Spencer Walpole, who has added to my previous sense of obligation to him by reading the more important chapters in manuscript, and by giving me the advantage of his wide and intimate knowledge of the period. It is only right, however, to add in this connection that Sir Spencer Walpole is in no sense responsible for any opinions expressed, or conclusions drawn in the book.

STUART J. REID.

Blackwell Cliff, East Grinstead, Sussex:
September 21, 1906.

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LORD DURHAM

CHAPTER I

THE LAMBTONS OF LAMBTON

High place is lost so easily that when a family has been of long continuance we may be sure that it has survived by exceptional merit.—Froude.

Earliest memorials of the family—Legend of the Lambton Worm—The Lambtons under the Tudors and Stuarts—Sir William Lambton—Episcopal rights over Durham—Boroughs of Durham and Newark—William Lambton, M.P., and the doorkeeper of the House of Commons—Henry Lambton and the Hedworths of Harraton—Lord Durham's grandfather in Parliament.

Few old families in England possess a more honourable record than the Lambtons. Tradition asserts that they have called their lands on the banks of the Wear, in the County of Durham, after their name from the days of the Saxons. However that may be, it is proved by charters and incidental allusions that the Lambtons were settled at Lambton within little more than a century from the Norman Conquest. The earliest signature that occurs is that of John de Lamtun, who attested the Charter of Uchtred de Wodeshend in the closing years of the twelfth century. In the following century the name had changed to Lamton, as is clear from the signature of another John de Lamton who witnessed in 1260 a Charter of Alexander III. of Scotland. His successor was Richard de Lamton, whose name occurs in the Charters of the neighbouring abbey of Finchale, made between the years 1270 and 1280. At least as

early as the reign of Edward II., the name assumed its present form, though the Norman prefix, 'de' lingered until the close of the fourteenth century, by which time the chief representative had come to be styled in the documents of the period 'Lord of Lambton,' though the family, in spite of powerful alliances, remained among the untitled aristocracy of the country until the days of George IV.

A straw is enough to show how the wind blows. There is a quaint north-country saying, half forgotten now, but once current coin on the lips of the people, 'Fit to keep company with the Lambtons,' which reveals better than anything else the position which this old family held in the estimation of their neighbours on the banks of the Tyne and Wear in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

There stood at the beginning of last century on the banks of the Wear close to the town of Chester-le-Street, and immediately within the entrance gates of Lambton Park, the ruins of an ancient oratory, known as the Chapel of Bridgeford, and this little shrine is associated in tradition with one of the most picturesque survivals of folk-lore in the north of England. The origin of the romantic legend of the Lambton Worm, like that of many another marvellous tale, which has been bequeathed in popular speech from antiquity, cannot now be determined, nor is it easy to disentangle the historical threads which are interwoven with the highly decorated narrative. The heir of Lambton—who afterwards came to be associated by local tradition with Sir John Lambton, Knight of Rhodes—was in the days of his minority a bold and somewhat reckless youth. It is said that he was accustomed to amuse himself on Sundays by fishing in the river Wear, and this 'profane custom' brought him into disrepute with his neighbours. He was not the most patient of mortals, and once, when

he had toiled all day and caught nothing, he expressed his chagrin in curses which were loud as well as deep. Just then there was a sharp pull at the end of his line, and, believing that he had at last hooked a large fish, he did his best, by skill and care, to land it. His expectations grew with the discovery that all his strength was needed for the task; but when at length he brought his line to land he found on the hook only a small and ugly worm, which he straightway flung, with angry contempt, into a neighbouring well.

Determined to try his luck once more, he threw his line back into the stream, and had scarcely done so, when a pilgrim of venerable aspect passed that way, and asked the discomfited angler how he fared in his sport. 'Well, truly, I think I have caught the Devil,' was the response, and with that he told the stranger to look in the well and draw his own conclusions. The old man did so, and declared that he had never seen so strange a creature. He said that the worm looked like an eft, yet had nine holes on each side of its mouth, and that, in short, so unsightly a haul betokened no good to anybody. The worm was left in the well and young Lambton forgot all about the adventure.

By-and-by, the worm grew too big for its quarters, and was compelled to seek another habitation. It crawled out of its retreat and betook itself to the Wear, where it usually lay in the daytime, coiled round a rock in the middle of the stream; but under cover of darkness it crept each night to a neighbouring hill, where it lay, until dawn warned it that it was time to betake itself once more to the river. The worm grew rapidly until at length it was able to wrap itself many times round the hill. It was the terror of the country-side, for it ravaged the district, devouring lambs and committing every kind of injury. Having laid waste the district to the north of the Wear, it crossed the river towards

Lambton Hall, where the old lord was then living, though his son—who had repented of his former life—was now a crusader. The steward of Lambton, believing that discretion was the better part of valour, determined to propitiate the worm. He filled a large trough, which stood in the courtyard, with milk. The monster crawled into the courtyard, drank the milk, and crept back to the hill on the other side of the stream without committing any havoc. Next day at the same hour the worm returned, and the milk of nine cows was required to satisfy its thirst. The steward, who was a thrifty man, tried a less quantity, but the worm lashed itself into fury, and, curling its tail round the trees in the park, tore them up by the roots. Many a gallant knight sought to slay the monster; yet, though the worm was wounded and sometimes cut asunder, the severed parts reunited, whilst the assailant never escaped without loss of life or limb.

Seven years of misery rolled away, and at the end of that period John de Lambton returned from the wars, only to discover that the broad lands of his ancestors lay waste and desolate. He quickly crossed the river to inspect the monster, which he found coiled round the base of the hill as usual. Warned by the fate of those who had engaged the creature in deadly strife, he consulted a witch as to the best means of destroying so great a plague. She told him that he had himself to blame for the disaster which had overtaken his father's house, and turned the surrounding country into a wilderness. Fortunately she went further and assured him that he must fix razor-blades in his best suit of armour, and take his stand on the rock in the middle of the river relying on his own valour and the might of his trusty sword. Before, however, he threw down the gage of battle in this way, he must make a solemn vow that if he triumphed in the conflict, he would slay the first

living thing he beheld. The witch warned him that, if he was successful and broke this vow, the lords of Lambton for nine generations would never die in their beds. He made the required vow in the little oratory of Bridgeford, which his ancestors had built, and, armed in the manner which the sorceress had directed, took his place on the rock which divided the stream, and there awaited his strange antagonist. At the accustomed time the worm left the hill and entered the river on its way towards Lambton Hall. As the monster approached the rock, the knight struck it a vigorous blow on the head with his sword, whereupon the enraged worm rose out of the water, wound itself swiftly around young Lambton and endeavoured to strangle him. The more tightly the knight was pressed, the more deadly were the wounds inflicted on the worm by the mail coat and its razor-blades, so that the river, sweeping down to the sea, became a stream of blood. The strength of the worm at length began to wane, and, as the reptile relaxed its hold, the knight, seizing his chance, cut it in twain. The severed part was borne away by the current, and the monster, being unable to join itself together again, was finally destroyed.

The struggle over, young Lambton sent to his anxious father a pre-arranged signal of his victory, by the notes of his bugle, in order that a favourite hound which was intended for the sacrifice might no longer be held back in the leash. The aged Lord of Lambton, however, in the excitement of the moment, forgot everything but the safety and victory of his son, and eagerly ran to meet him. The hero was overwhelmed with grief when he beheld his father, and, hoping that the curse might yet be arrested without the sin of parricide, he sounded another blast on his bugle, and this time his favourite hound, impatient of further restraint, broke the leash and bounded to his side.

The knight with great reluctance drew his sword and plunged it into the breast of his faithful dog; but such a sacrifice was unavailing. The sinister prediction was fulfilled, and for the space of nine generations the curse of the sorceress rested heavily upon the House of Lambton.

Two ancient figures, which were evidently intended to preserve the legend, may still be seen in one of the conservatories at Lambton Castle. One represents the victor in the strange conflict. He is fully armed, and is in the act of thrusting his broadsword down the throat of the dragon. The knight's armour is covered with razor-blades. The other figure is that of a woman, and is commonly supposed to represent the maid who daily filled the worm's trough with milk, though, according to another tradition, the figure is that of the sibyl who warned the hero of Lambton. The Worm Hill is about a mile and a half lower down the Wear than the Castle, and is still a place of pilgrimage, but the old Worm Well has been filled up, and its site is now a matter of conjecture. An old ballad of the country side recounts in halting but picturesque verse the legend of the Lambton Worm, and ends as follows:—

Forfend us from the like mishap
In all the north countrie;
May nought so dear in Tyne or Wear
Cause dole to thee and me!

So now God rest the Lambtons all,
And prosper long that line;
Such deed before was never known
In all the olden time!

It is not necessary to burden these pages with a long list of names gathered out of the family pedigree, from the Plantagenets to the present reign. It is enough here and there, in the long annals of a family, which has always played a great part in the political and social life in the north of England, to allude in

passing to persons and incidents, that show the position which the Lambtons have always held in Durham, and often in the great affairs of the nation. The earliest monument to one of the race is a mediæval brass—the only monumental record of its kind—now left in the noble and venerable church of Chester-le-Street, which for centuries was the burial-place of the family. It represents, in effigy, Alice Lambton, who died in 1434. This brass was originally on the floor of the nave, but now adorns the south wall of the chancel. There was at one time a companion brass to the memory of her husband, William Lambton, who died in 1430, but it long ago disappeared from the church. Another William Lambton, of the next generation, was Head of Balliol between the years 1461 and 1472. When England was under the Tudors, the Lambtons appear to have been content to lead a life of dignified simplicity amongst their own people, without intermeddling with affairs of State. At the Reformation the Lambtons were among the first in the north of England to embrace the Protestant religion, and from the time of Ralph Lambton, who flourished in the days of Elizabeth, the ascendency of the family in the county of Durham became more marked. In that reign there was born to Ralph Lambton, his son and successor, William, a gallant soldier who was knighted at Newmarket, at the age of twenty-five, in 1614 by James I. Sir William Lambton was at one time colonel of a regiment of foot, and at another a captain of a troop of horse in the service of Charles I.

On the outbreak of the Civil War, Sir William Lambton distinguished himself by his loyalty, and was given the command of the Durham Dragoons in the levy which was made in 1640 against Scotland. His lands lay too near the Border for their master to take sides with the King with impunity, and, when the Scots

entered England, the Lambton estates were plundered and the mansion fired. Three years later a still greater loss fell upon this gallant Cavalier, for in a battle of the Civil War near Bradford his eldest son and namesake was mortally wounded. Sir William Lambton attained the rank of Colonel, and himself was slain in the royal cause at Marston Moor on that fateful July 2, 1644. Another son of Sir William Lambton, also a knight, was Sir Thomas, who, after much military service, eventually became Governor of the Leeward Isles under Cromwell. Sir William was succeeded in the family honours by another and older son than Sir Thomas, namely, Henry Lambton. He was one of the eleven magistrates who successfully fought the battle of the freeholders of the County and City of Durham for the right to send representatives to the House of Commons. The County Palatine and the City of Durham were alike 'exempt from the burthen'—so runs the curious phrase—'of sending representatives to Parliament, in consequence of the Bishop's lordly prerogatives and exclusive rights of jurisdiction.' The Bishop of Durham, by virtue of his office, was able to levy taxes and raise men within the diocese without reference to the authority of Parliament. These extraordinary claims appear to have gone unchallenged through the middle ages, but, during the comparative quietude which prevailed under the Tudors, the gentry and burgesses of the north were not content to endure tamely disabilities which were often accompanied by extortions, from which there was no appeal.

In the reign of Elizabeth, the question of the Bishop's jurisdiction was brought before Parliament, and, as early as 1562, a bill was read in the House of Commons for levying fines in the County Palatine of Durham, and for giving the inhabitants the right to send two members to Westminster. Nothing came of

such a proposal, and the matter rested, so far as the House of Commons was concerned, until the year 1614, when another bill was introduced for 'knights and burgesses to have a place in Parliament for the County Palatine and City of Durham'; but ecclesiastical influence again succeeded in defeating the proposal. Again and again, with sturdy persistency, the political claims of Durham were brought before Parliament, and this was notably the case in the years 1620, 1623 and 1642; and in the last-mentioned year, on April 7, a measure of enfranchisement actually passed the Commons. At length, in 1645, the inhabitants of the county were able to petition that the bill, which had 'passed both Houses for knights and burgesses' might 'take effect from henceforth.' Just then Parliament had a much greater constitutional question to settle, and, though the agitation was again and again renewed, it was not until the Commonwealth that the privilege was granted.

In the Parliaments of 1654 and 1656 both the County and the City were represented, the former by Colonel Robert Lilburne, one of the regicides, and brother of the famous Colonel John Lilburne, commonly called Freeborn John. In the last Parliament of the Commonwealth, however, on grounds which it is impossible to understand, no member was admitted to represent either the County or the City. At the Restoration a determined attempt, this time for 'restoring members' to Durham, was made, and all classes of the people were aroused to the importance of the struggle. Bishop Cosin stood stubbornly to his ancient rights, and his personal ascendency was so great that, regardless of the petition of Henry Lambton and other magistrates, the measure when brought before Parliament was again lost, though this time by a paltry majority of five votes. This defeat took place in 1668, and the agitation subsided until Bishop Cosin's death in 1672.

It was then successfully renewed, and an Act was passed, when the see of Durham was still vacant in 1673, which empowered the freeholders to elect two knights for the County, and the mayor, aldermen and freemen of the City of Durham to elect two burgesses to represent them in Parliament. Various technical difficulties were raised, and it was not until 1675 that the first election took place for the County, and 1678 for the City. Durham and Newark were the only places that obtained political privileges under Charles II.; indeed, from the close of the reign of James I. to the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832, these were the only two boroughs which were created in either England or Wales. It is interesting in this connection to remember, in passing, that two of the foremost statesmen of Queen Victoria's reign obtained admission to the House of Commons as representatives of these boroughs; for Newark, in 1832, returned Gladstone, while John Bright, in 1843, was elected for Durham. Henry Lambton died August 24, 1693, at the age of seventy-nine, and during the closing years of his life his eldest son William represented the County.

In 1685, ten years after the County of Durham obtained the privilege of returning members to the House of Commons, William Lambton was elected one of its representatives. He was the son of the public-spirited magistrate, who had done much to defeat the Lords of Misrule at Auckland Castle, and the grandson of the brave Royalist who fell fighting for the King. William Lambton, M.P., was born in the reign of Charles I. and lived through the Commonwealth, the Restoration, the Revolution—to witness the victories of Marlborough, and the accession of the House of Hanover. He was educated at King's College, Oxford, with Henry, the elder of his two brothers. Henry was admitted, in 1662, a student of Gray's Inn, and eventually became

Attorney-General to Crewe, Bishop of Durham, and died in 1713. William Lambton represented the county under three monarchs and in seven Parliaments, and died unmarried in 1724, at the ripe age of eighty-four. He was a man of simple manners, great force of character, and honesty of purpose. Wherever he went he was recognised as a fine example of a country gentleman of the old school, fearless, outspoken, upright; and it is recorded to his credit that, through a long and eventful political career, he was looked upon as one of the most honourable and independent members of the House of Commons. 'Old True Blue,' as men termed him, had no fears, and sought no favours, and in all the Black and White Lists which it was then the custom to print, his name stands unblemished by place or pension.

One incident in his career, which has escaped oblivion, deserves to be recorded here, if only because it throws into relief the quick pride, though scarcely the gracious manners, of his race. A new Parliament had assembled, and a new doorkeeper, inclined to magnify his office, stood ready to challenge the admission of all and sundry. The old northern squire, who had been familiar for years with Westminster, came to the door of the Commons, dressed in a plain grey homespun coat, made of the wool of his own sheep. His aspect was so homely that the doorkeeper would not allow him to proceed further than the lobby, where he sat down quietly without further ado, until a friend, tricked out in smart clothes, appeared. The newcomer quickly took in the situation, and protested against the slight which had been put upon a man whom he described as one of the most esteemed members of the House. The doorkeeper now changed his tone, which had been sufficiently exasperating, and hoped 'His Honour' would give him something as a remembrance. 'Old True Blue' would readily have overlooked the

fellow's rudeness, but he detested the cringing servility which now took its place, and in a sudden fit of indignation he boxed his ears roughly, and exclaimed 'There's a God's penny for thee. I think thou'lt ken auld Will Lambton again!'

This brusque worthy was succeeded in the family honours by his nephew, Henry, son of Ralph Lambton, who married Dorothy, daughter and heiress of John Hedworth of Harraton, on the northern banks of the Wear, and for several generations Harraton House became the seat of the Lambton family. Henry Lambton represented the City of Durham from the year 1734 to his death, in the summer of 1761. Tradition declares that Henry Lambton was the last of the race upon whom the curse of the sibyl fell, since he was ninth in descent from the Crusader who did battle with the worm. The gossips of the country-side were accustomed to wonder, in Henry Lambton's lifetime, whether the sinister prediction would hold good to the last. He died suddenly, almost at his own gates, as his carriage was crossing the bridge over the Wear, and the old legend seems to have been fulfilled.

Henry Lambton represented the City of Durham in four Parliaments with credit to himself and satisfaction to his neighbours. His career was marked in the days of the Jacobite rebellion by unshaken loyalty, and, according to a contemporary record, he was a man who was 'neither biassed by private nor party interest, but was always a strenuous advocate for liberty.' He was not merely 'firmly attached to the good of his country,' but 'his constituents on every occasion found in him a sincere and steady friend.'

He was succeeded by his brother, Major-General John Lambton, who was born July 26, 1710. General Lambton entered the army as an ensign in the Coldstream Guards in 1732, and after a long term of service

rose to the rank of Major-General in 1761; Lieutenant-General 1770; and General in 1782. Early in his military career he was appointed Colonel of the Sixty-eighth Regiment, and was in command when it took part in the attack on St. Malo in 1758. The Sixty-eighth Regiment, of which General Lambton retained the Colonelcy until his death, had been chiefly recruited in Durham, and, when County titles were given to line regiments, it was styled the Durham Regiment, and this local association has always been retained. At the election which was occasioned by the death of his brother in the summer of 1761, General Lambton contested the vacant seat against Major Gowland. He was the favourite candidate on personal as well as on family grounds, for he was known to be a man steadily attached to the popular cause. His chances, however, were small, for a month previous to the election the mayor and a majority of the aldermen, according to the statement of the late Sir Cuthbert Sharp, 'having displaced sixteen common councilmen and named others of inferior fortunes, repealed the by-law of November 8, 1728, by which none could be admitted freemen until their claim had passed three quarterly guilds, and made a new by-law, under the sanction whereof above two hundred occasional freemen were created.' The poll remained open amid much excitement for five days, and on December 12 Major Gowland was declared duly elected.

The truth was that the constituency had been swamped by the sudden creation of illegal voters; but General Lambton was not a man to accept such a decision. He promptly carried the matter to the House of Commons, where it was resolved on May 11, 1762, that the occasional freemen had no right to vote, and the return was ordered to be amended by striking out the name of Ralph Gowland and inserting that of John

Lambton in its place, since the latter, it was proved, had a majority of 192, exclusive of the occasional voters. When the decision was announced General Lambton stood in the position of a victorious champion of popular rights, against the arbitrary power of a corrupt and unreformed corporation.

There is a letter in existence which General Lambton wrote to his friend Mr. Baker, who, with his wife, had been amongst his most enthusiastic supporters in his contest in Durham, immediately after his cause had triumphed in the House of Commons. It is headed 'Gerrard Street, Soho, 13th May, 1762,' and runs as follows:—'After all my fatigues and trouble, the 11th of May crowned the glorious success in the House in my favour—upon the decision 88 for me, against 72—and yesterday I was introduced and took my seat. I will say no more to you or madam, but can easily conceive your great joy on the occasion. Methinks I see madam in her triumphant car. The foaming chestnuts, in true blue, driving through the acclamations of the people, "Long live Mrs. Baker; Liberty and Freedom restored to the corporation." She, in her usual way, smiling and bowing as she passes. I shall defer every other thing till I see you and crack a bottle.'

On his return to the north he received a great ova tion, and, to borrow his own expression, was 'Chaired to the skies'; nor was this all, for, by his spirited protest, the chance of such an abuse of municipal power in the future was rendered impossible by the passing, in the third year of George III.'s reign, of the Durham Act. By the provisions of this statute no persons had a right to vote who had not been in possession of the franchise twelve calendar months before the opening day of the poll. General Lambton represented the City in five successive Parliaments. He voted against the high-handed measures which drove the American Colonies

into rebellion, and, though inclined to distrust Pitt at the outset of that statesman's career, he supported him when he endeavoured in the spring of 1783 to secure reform in the representation of the people. General Lambton married on September 5, 1763, Lady Susan Lyon, daughter of Thomas, Earl of Strathmore. Lady Susan Lambton died in 1769, leaving two sons, William Henry and Ralph, and two daughters. The old soldier survived his wife for a quarter of a century.

General Lambton retired from Parliament in January 1787, and his eldest son, William Henry Lambton, at the age of twenty-three, succeeded to the vacant seat. Such a compliment was keenly appreciated by the old soldier, who, two or three days after his son's election, wrote a letter to his former constituents in which the following words occur: 'I had no reason to expect such a particular testimony of your approbation for the mere discharge of my duty. Although I can hardly harbour a desire of rivalling the present object of your choice, yet I must confess, it makes me happy to think that by my past services I have secured myself a permanent place in your affections.' General Lambton died on April 22, 1794, and in the space of scarcely more than three years the son, upon whom his hopes were built—a man of brilliant promise—followed him to the grave, leaving in turn a son, then a mere child, who was destined to play a great part in English affairs in the approaching century as the first Earl of Durham.

CHAPTER II

LORD DURHAM'S FATHER, AND THE 'FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE'

Society was becoming separated into two opposite camps—the friends and the foes of Democracy.—Sir Erskine May.

Early years and political friends of W. H. Lambton—Speeches in Parliament—Origin and aims of the 'Friends of the People'—Leading supporters of the Society—England under Pitt—Earl Grey on the electoral system—Suspension of Habeas Corpus—W. H. Lambton's denunciation of the Government—Building of Lambton Castle—Dr. Beddoes and Dr. Darwin—W. H. Lambton's letters from Naples—His last days, and death in Italy—'A man made to be loved.'

WILLIAM HENRY LAMBTON, the father of the subject of these memoirs, was in many respects a remarkable man, and, on all questions of liberty and justice, far in advance of his times. Born November 15, 1764, he was sent at the age of seven to a preparatory school at Wandsworth, where he remained five years, when he passed to the wider culture of Eton. He rose steadily from form to form in that famous public school, and was distinguished beyond most boys of his own age by devotion to learning. He won at Eton an enviable position as a classical scholar, and the Musae Etonensis may be cited in proof of his skill in the composition of Latin odes. From Eton, young Lambton passed at eighteen to Trinity College, Cambridge, and at the University his schoolboy friendship was renewed with Charles Grey of King's—whose father was afterwards raised to the Peerage, and who himself became in due course second Earl Grey—and

Samuel Whitbread of St. John's, who afterwards married Charles Grey's sister, and became one of the closest friends of Charles Fox, as well as one of the most influential members of the Whig Party. Lambton, Grey, and Whitbread were alike filled with political ambition, the two former being exactly of the same age, and both of them representative of the landed interest in the north of England.

On quitting the University in the summer of 1784, William Henry Lambton travelled widely on the Continent. He was a man of broad culture and cosmopolitan sympathies, and, settling for a time at Versailles, became a well-known figure at the Court of Louis XVI. His father's failing health recalled him from the Continent, and, as has already been stated, he entered the House of Commons in February 1787, as member for Durham. Pitt was in power, and, in spite of his pledge, was beginning to shirk the question of Parliamentary Reform, to which as an honourable man he was committed by his speeches at an earlier stage of his career. Fox, though doomed to opposition by his rival's triumph and the settled hostility of the Court, was becoming more and more the champion of the desolate and the oppressed, and the friend of liberty in every quarter of the globe. Mr. Lambton threw in his lot with the minority which Fox led, and took his seat on the Opposition benches, side by side with his friend Charles Grey, who had been elected for his native county of Northumberland in the previous year. Many years afterwards, when Lambton was dead, and his son, after a long minority, had succeeded to the family honours, and had begun a still more memorable Parliamentary career, Earl Grey in a speech at Newcastle in the autumn of 1814 used these words: 'The late Mr. Lambton and myself were at school together. We entered Parliament about the same time, and we

sat side by side supporting the principles of Mr. Fox. In that course we proceeded, with no other emulation than that arising from each being engaged in the service of his country. Thus we continued till that period which unfortunately terminated in his death. It is a great satisfaction to me to see his son engaged in the same sacred cause, and in the exercise of the same sacred principles.'

Lambton delivered his first speech in Parliament in the spring of 1787, when he seconded Fox's motion for the repeal of the Shop Tax, which he denounced as unjust and oppressive. He rapidly made his mark in the House of Commons, as a ready and graceful speaker. He was a man of fine appearance, and, even at a time when the eloquence of Pitt and Fox threw most young orators into the shade, the scholarly, outspoken north-country squire was able to command, not merely the respect, but the attention of the House. When England, in 1790, seemed drifting into a war with Spain, Lambton vigorously supported Grey in denouncing such a project, which he declared to be, in his opinion, a wanton exercise of power, and the 'readiest mode' of precipitating national bankruptcy. One subject above all others engaged his attention in those dark days of national oppression, and that was the imperative necessity of Parliamentary Reform. In his 'Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents,' Burke declared, 'I see no other way for the preservation of a decent attention to public interest in the representatives but the interposition of the body of the people itself.' Men like Grey, Lambton, Tierney, and Erskine were not long in the House of Commons before they discovered that that assembly was hopelessly opposed even to the most reasonable concessions, and therefore, chilled and discomfited within the walls of Parliament, were forced to the conclusion that nothing short of national agita-

tion and pressure from without would bring so corrupt and arbitrary an assembly to its senses.

This conviction, and the crying, unredressed grievances of the nation, called into existence, in the spring of 1792, the powerful association known as 'The Friends of the People.' William Henry Lambton was one of the founders of this Society, and he presided at the historic meeting at the Freemasons' Tavern, London, on April 26, 1792, when the movement took shape, and as Chairman signed an outspoken manifesto. The avowed aim of the Friends of the People was to 'restore freedom of election and a more equal representation of the people in Parliament,' as well as to 'secure to the people a more frequent exercise of their right of electing their representatives.' It is easy in these days to pose as a friend of even-handed justice, but it required courage then, and few men of rank and wealth in the country were prepared to brave the ridicule and social ostracism which rewarded those who were zealous in such a matter.

The address to the nation, for which Lambton was responsible, referred to the rising panic occasioned by the French Revolution, and went on to assert that there was no resemblance whatever between the case of England and France, and to add that the Friends of the People utterly disclaimed the necessity of resorting to similar remedies. 'The abuses in the government of France were suffered to gather and accumulate until nothing but an eruption could put an end to them. The discontent of the people was converted into despair. Preventive remedies were either not thought of in time, or were not proposed until it was too late to apply them with effect. The subversion of the ancient government ensued. We mean to avert for ever from our country the calamities inseparable from such convulsions. Between anarchy and

despotism we have no choice to make, no preference to give. We neither admit the necessity, nor can we endure the idea of resorting to either of these extremities as a refuge from the other. The course we are determined to pursue is equally distant from both.'

Amongst those who enrolled themselves as Friends of the People occur the names of Grey and Mackintosh, Sheridan and Tierney, Whitbread and Cartwright, Erskine and Maitland. In the list of these reformers before the reformation is the name not only of the father of Lord Durham, but also that of the father of Lord John Russell. Lambton defended the Friends of the People in his place in Parliament, as well as in the Press. He declared that if tumult or confusion followed such proposals, he was in the position of a man who had everything to lose and nothing to gain. His desire was to see the constitution of England reformed in strict harmony with its own principles, and he was determined to do all that lay in his power to advance such a cause. Within a month of the publication of the Manifesto of the Friends of the People, George III. issued a counterblast, in the shape of a proclamation, for preventing seditious meetings and writings, in which he sagely counselled 'due submission to the laws of the land,' and solemnly warned his faithful subjects to have neither part nor lot with disturbers of the public peace.

Public opinion in England changed with dramatic swiftness in 1792. When the year opened, Pitt, who was then in power, prophesied smooth things. He declared in the House of Commons that there never was a time in the history of England when it was more reasonable to expect fifteen years of peace. Never was the political forecast of a responsible statesman more utterly falsified, for within the space of a few months there came to England, not peace, but a sword, and

instead of entering upon the heritage of 'fifteen years of quietude' the nation was summoned to endure the stress and strain of more than twenty years of bloodshed. Pitt, who, ten years earlier, had moved for the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee to 'inquire into the state of the representation of the people of Great Britain,' had grown lukewarm, if not callous, on the subject of Reform, and was now beginning to pose as the champion of law and order against the dangers of democracy and the appeal for political justice. He misunderstood the French Revolution and the great issues which it involved, and embarked, in consequence, on a retrogressive policy. In this connection it is significant that, in the course of 1792, the Government began to build barracks in such great centres of population as Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield and Nottingham, in order that the troops might be within call to nip in the bud any riot or hostile demonstration on the part of the people. Straws show how swift was the current, how sudden the eddies which marked its turbulent course.

In August, 1792, a Mansion House Fund was opened for the relief of the people of Poland in their struggle against Russia; but in November the rich merchants of the City had been reduced to an abject state of panic by tidings of the massacre of the Swiss guards in Paris, and accordingly they banded themselves together in a new association which might have called itself the Foes of the People, even though its professed object was to shield 'liberty and property against Republicans and levellers.' This was followed on December 1, by a proclamation, calling out the Militia, in view of the existing crisis, and exactly two months later, on February 1, 1793, France, believing that the English Government was as helpless as the ancient régime which France had just destroyed, and therefore powerless

to control the forces of disaffection, declared war against this country, only to find, when it was too late, that in presence of a common jeopardy the nation stood firm.

Grey, as chief Parliamentary spokesman of the Friends of the People, duly introduced on May 6, 1793, the Petition of that association, an historical document which for the first time threw light on the abuses of the electoral system, and at the same time stated, with great clearness and moderation, a variety of reasons for Parliamentary Reform. He moved that the question be referred to the consideration of a committee of the House of Commons; but Pitt had now too much on his hands to make what he termed hazardous experiments, and the proposal was shelved, to the equal delight of the tyrannical and the timid, by a majority of 241 votes. The tendency of legislation during the next few years was in truth not to enlarge the liberties of England, but to curtail them, for the excesses which marked the Reign of Terror in France were regarded in England as a justification for all manner of high-handed and arbitrary proceedings. It was a period of far-reaching suspicion, in which every man who dared to talk of liberty was regarded as a friend of licence and anarchy. Lambton himself was mobbed as a Jacobin, for the panic-mongers did their best to transform prejudice into violence and intimidation.

Men of liberal ideas were at a discount in England just then, and their position became even less tolerable when Pitt so far forgot his former pledges as to bring in a Bill which empowered his Majesty to secure and detain without trial persons suspected of conspiring against his person and government. Fox, Sheridan, Grey, and Lambton led the minority which resisted such a proposal, but they had only a following of thirty-five members when they divided the House against the

introduction of the measure. Sir Erskine May (afterwards Lord Farnborough), in his 'Constitutional History,' says that the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was virtually a suspension of Magna Charta and of the cardinal principles of the Common Law. In spite of all protests, the Bill was passed, and, because the ruling classes were afraid of democracy, England surrendered her liberty to a despotism of the worst description.

Lambton's last speech in Parliament, on January 23, 1795—his health was rapidly failing—was a bold protest against this iniquitous abuse of power. He challenged the Government to show cause for such a measure, and ridiculed the notion of secret conspiracies. He opposed the Bill, since it went against the vital principle of English law, which holds every man innocent until he is proved to be guilty, and because it 'gave encouragement to the nefarious practices of those damnable fiends, commonly called spies.' He asked whether it was a fit thing that the people should, without any reason, be deprived of their rights? 'It was a lamentable truth that the King's Minister had conducted himself as if he had a hatred for the lower classes of society. He had drawn, as it were, a line of demarcation between the rich and the poor of the country. He had taught the rich to look with contempt upon the poor. For my part I have always thought that the true English policy was to unite them in one bond of harmony and love for the Constitution, under which they were both protected, not to encourage suspicion in the one and envy in the other, so as to make rich and poor two separate and hostile parties. I do not mean to say there are not persons who wish to throw things into confusion—such persons there must be in every country—but I mean to say that there was not anything of such magnitude as to call for such powers in the hands of the Executive Government.'

Mr. Lambton went on to refer to an allusion to the Friends of the People which Pitt had made, and declared that he should be glad to see that Minister attempt to prove that the Friends of the People had been guilty of one rash act or one unpatriotic sentiment. 'What had that Society lately done? They had suspended their action for Parliamentary Reform. Had they abandoned their object? Certainly not. But there was one common danger now in which all were involved; it was paramount and superior to all other considerations; it was therefore their duty to refrain for the present from agitating the minds of the public, and they had therefore withdrawn their efforts for Parliamentary Reform. How long were they to be inactive? During the continuance of the present calamity, and no longer. When it pleases God to remove that calamity, we shall then stand upon advantageous ground with the people of this country. We shall be enabled to say to them—the dangers and difficulties which you have been under, the calamities you have experienced, were brought on by a corrupt administration, acting through the medium of a corrupt Parliament. The language which I have used, I will repeat—I say that will be the vantage-ground on which we shall stand, and such is the address which I for one shall make to the people, and I will defy the artifices of any set of men to counteract it, for I know that there is a great deal of discernment in the people of this country.' Argument and warning were alike thrown away, and a measure became law, which rendered any man liable to be arrested on mere suspicion of treasonable practices, and without a definite charge, much less a proof of guilt. A man so entrapped did not even know who his accusers were, and it was idle for him to demand public trial.

It is time, however, to turn from public affairs and

G. Romney, pinxt.

Walter L. Colls, Ph. Sc.

General John Lambton

M.P. for Durham. 1761-87.

the wooded banks of the Wear. Social life in Durham in those days was dominated by high Tory and narrow clerical influences, and yet Mr. Lambton was popular in the county, and as ardent in the hunting-field as outspoken in the House of Commons. He married in his father's lifetime—June 19, 1791—Lady Anne Barbara Frances Villiers, second daughter of George, fourth Earl of Jersey, and General Lambton lived to see his eldest grandson, the subject of these memoirs. There were five children of this marriage, John George, William Henry, Henry, Hedworth, and Frances Susan, who married Major the Hon. Frederick Howard, who was slain at Waterloo.

Nearly two years after the death of General Lambton, his son and successor began to show signs of consumption—a malady which had carried off his mother at an early age. During the winter of 1827 Mr. Lambton's health perceptibly

the part which William Henry Lambton played in them, in order to recount what yet remains to be told concerning his personal career. On the death of his father, in the spring of 1794, Mr. Lambton succeeded to the family estate, and at once began to make preparations for the building of the present Lambton Castle—a mansion designed by Bonomi, and standing on the site of the old Harraton Hall, in a lofty position at a picturesque turn on the wooded banks of the Wear. Social life in Durham in those days was dominated by high Tory and narrow clerical influences, and yet Mr. Lambton was popular in the county, and as ardent in the hunting-field as outspoken in the House of Commons. He married in his father's lifetime—June 19, 1791—Lady Anne Barbara Frances Villiers, second daughter of George, fourth Earl of Jersey, and General Lambton lived to see his eldest grandson, the subject of these memoirs. There were five children of this marriage, John George, William Henry, Henry, Hedworth, and Frances Susan, who married Major the Hon. Frederick Howard, who was slain at Waterloo.

Scarcely two years after the death of General Lambton, his son and successor began to show signs of a tendency to consumption—a malady which had smitten down his mother at an early age. During the winter of 1795 Mr. Lambton's health perceptibly declined, and in the spring he travelled along the old coaching roads by easy stages to Bristol, in order to consult Dr. Thomas Beddoes of Clifton, the brother-in-law of Maria Edgeworth, and the father of Thomas Lovell Beddoes, who came, in the middle of last century, into posthumous fame as a poet and dramatist by the publication of that saturnine tragedy 'Death's Jest Book.' Dr. Beddoes was born in 1760 and died in 1808. He studied at Pembroke College, Oxford, and after taking his degree in Arts proceeded to Edinburgh,

where he graduated in medicine in 1786. In the following year—the year in which Lambton entered Parliament—Beddoes was appointed Professor of Chemistry at Oxford, but in 1792 was compelled to resign his position on account of his outspoken approval of the French Revolution. He then settled at Clifton, where he grew renowned as a physician, and also won considerable reputation in the scientific world by the publication of his philosophical researches. He is described by those who knew him as an enthusiastic and sanguine man, of great force of character and conspicuous ability, of reserved and almost dry manners. 'From Beddoes,' wrote Southey when he heard of his death, 'I hoped for more good to the human race than from any other individual.' 'I felt,' wrote Coleridge, in allusion to the same event, 'that more had been taken out of my life by this than by any former event.'

Mr. Lambton, in a manuscript diary which he wrote in the closing months of his life, after describing his journey to Bristol, gives the following account of his acquaintance with this distinguished physician: 'I put myself under the care of Dr. Beddoes, a man of first-rate talents in his profession, and becoming conspicuous in the world for his application of pneumatic remedies to several diseases heretofore considered incurable. To this eminent man I was partly recommended by Dr. Clark of Newcastle, and partly by my friend Mr. Hare, who had derived singular benefit from his administration of oxygen in a case of confirmed asthma. It must be confessed that the doctor's exterior or deportment is not calculated to prejudice a new patient in his favour, not that it produced the slightest effect upon my mind. I have lived long enough and seen enough of mankind to know how little reliance is to be placed upon outward appearances. Under Dr. Beddoes I gradually recovered my strength, but, as he remained somewhat

dubious as to several of the symptoms of my case, he recommended me to take the opinion of Dr. Erasmus Darwin, of Derby, whose name as a physician will live in his "Zoonomia" as long as human malady must have recourse to human skill, and as a poet in his "Botanic Garden" as long as taste, genius, and philosophy shall attract the attention of mankind.'

Mr. Lambton made an appointment with Dr. Darwin in Birmingham—the father of a son of still greater fame—Charles Darwin, the author of 'The Origin of Species.' He journeyed thither from Bristol in the company of Dr. Beddoes. He was keenly alive to the significance of the great industrial revolution which was even then in progress, and he determined to see for himself, on the occasion of this visit to a great manufacturing centre, the new methods which were beginning to transform the trade of the country. 'We arrived at Birmingham a day before our appointment, for the purpose of seeing the different manufactories for which that town has been so justly celebrated. We were invited by Messrs. Boulton and Watts, and were accompanied by them in person over the whole of their astonishing undertaking. The variety of the concerns, the stupendous magnitude of some, the nice and exquisite workmanship of others, the enormous amount of the capital necessary to carry them on, the importation of the raw, and the exportation of the manufactured materials, all concurred to raise these men in my estimation far beyond the gaudy greatness of indolent nobility.' Mr. Lambton adds that Messrs. Boulton and Watts as 'champions of practical science,' inspired him with a degree of respect which he had 'never felt for monarch or minister.' Afterwards he describes his meeting with Dr. Erasmus Darwin. He states that such a 'union of learning and affability, real superiority and unaffected humility' he had never found in any

other man, except the "immortal leader of the present opposition, C. J. Fox."

Neither of his physicians appears at this time to have taken a serious view of Mr. Lambton's health; in a few weeks he seemed, to borrow his own phrase, to have outweathered the storm, but, unfortunately, a chill, caught in the following summer, brought with it alarming symptoms; and the necessity of seeking a mild climate before the winter set in grew suddenly imperative. He shrank from the thought of separation from his young wife and little children, and in the end determined to charter a vessel and to set out, accompanied by his wife and family, and a tutor for his children, for Naples. This was unquestionably, at the time, a risky undertaking, since wars and rumours of wars prevailed, and tempest and shipwreck were, on the high seas, not the only peril to solitary ships. He gives a half-pathetic, half-humorous description of the fittings of the vessel, his preparations for a prolonged absence from England, and the incidents of a protracted voyage, which was not without its element of romance and adventure. Before embarking he placed his affairs in the hands of his brother, Mr. Ralph Lambton, and his old and intimate friend Mr. Thomas Wilkinson, a well-known solicitor, and appointed them trustees under his will. There are in existence a number of faded letters, written from Naples and Rome to Mr. Ralph Lambton in 1796–97, revealing much more than merely manly fortitude and strength of affection. Many of them, it is true, are filled with pitiful little details about the writer's health, business directions for the conduct of his affairs, or with the passing incidents of the hour. Others contain shrewd personal impressions of Italy, comments on the war, and opinions on politics in England. Through them all it is possible to discern a brave man struggling with

adversity, and looking steadily, and without illusions, at the insoluble problems of life and destiny.

'*Naples: December* 5, 1796.—You little know how gratifying it is even to hear that old England, the county of Durham and Lambton, stands as it did when we left it, and to hear that you are well, can, in no place, be indifferent, and, at such distance, must be, at all times, the most grateful intelligence.' He goes on to say that post succeeds post without a letter from home, and to declare that he thinks his brother must have been startled by tidings that he had been wrecked upon the coast of Spain or Sardinia, or had been captured by the Turks, and was therefore determined to await, before writing, the arrival of authentic news. He ridicules the scare about an invasion of England. 'I must freely own, nothing to my mind is more unlikely than an invasion of England. The Minister's great object in bringing the matter forward is alarm, the old stalking horse with which he has drained our pockets and destroyed our Constitution.' He thinks, however, that volunteers ought to be raised in the country. 'I find from the newspapers that an addition is to be made to the militia and a provisional levy of cavalry, in case of invasion. I must be presumptuous to think I have as good a claim as any other in our country, and a stake to preserve against a foreign enemy, to which I could not be indifferent. Rather than comply with the Act (as I suppose it will be ultimately passed) in furnishing men and horses according to the number we keep, I would recommend you to apply to many of our neighbours and my tenants, proposing to raise such a corps, which would occasionally meet to exercise, and which would exempt them from the new Act, and be a pleasanter mode of doing such a service. In case of actual invasion, neither expense nor personal risk should for an instant be considered.'

In the same letter he gives an amusing account of his adventures at a royal hunt at Naples, and laughingly refers to the manner in which his brother, as a crack sportsman, would have sworn at the method pursued. 'What think you of two brace of the neatest short-backed sleek foxes being killed in two minutes with greyhounds? We also slaughtered fourteen wild boars. However, an excellent dinner made up for the sport, and the king, who is the best-humoured man I ever saw, jocosely asked how we liked his short method of killing foxes. John, who is at my elbow, begs me to tell his uncle he sends him a kiss, and Billy, who has just come into the room, being asked what he would send, said, "Anything I've got." Pray write soon.'

Lambton was being built at this time under Bonomi, and there are allusions to its progress. Mr. Lambton eventually took a house four miles from Naples, where he remained until his departure for Rome.

'*Naples: December* 12, 1796.—News I can communicate none, except the publication of Peace between this country and France, which took place yesterday. I wish with all my heart England could boast of the same event. I fear, however, you are far distant from any such blessing. To me it appears that no one proper step almost has been taken for that purpose. Lord Malmesbury's Mission is truly the most ridiculous piece of political acting which even Mr. Pitt has as yet exhibited to his admiring country. If some guardian genius of Britain's Isle does not interfere very soon, we shall, I fear, live to see sorry days.'

Under date February 28, 1797, he makes with characteristic vigour a running comment on public affairs.

'The great majority of Englishmen will deserve all they suffer. However, the innocent, alas! suffer with the guilty, and the effect of our ministerial folly is in-

discriminate.' He proceeds to denounce the herd of stock-jobbers, contractors, and the thousands who feed and fatten upon the spoils of their country. Old England, he fears, is now 'sinking into the decrepitude of old age,' since 'all her passions are excited by stimulants.' In a subsequent note we find him declaring, All is confusion in this devoted country. Three weeks without a line or a newspaper, and as Bonaparte has taken possession of Ancona, our prospect is still more distant of better luck in future. I enjoy myself and am contented; my health is unquestionably improved.'

The next letter speaks for itself, and deserves to be quoted at length, if only for the light which it casts upon the writer.

'Naples: March 27, 1797.

'My dear Ralph,—You must rest satisfied with what Anne calls a squib of a letter this time, as I have so many upon my hands that I hardly know how I shall be able to fulfil my engagements in one post. You will easily guess the event which makes me so busy—however, not to trust entirely to your conjectures, I may as well tell you distinctly that the night before last Anne was safely delivered of a fine boy, and they are both in a most prosperous way. Wilkinson sent me two pamphlets, one by Burke, the other by Erskine, and you will be surprised that, except a few pages of the last, all came safe to hand by the common post.

'By-the-bye, I must not omit telling you, as some proof of my present health (perhaps you will say more than of my prudence), that I have climbed to the top of Vesuvius, and taken a peep at the crater. At present, from the quiet state of the mountain, nothing particular is to be seen, except smoke oozing out of the sides in different places, and indeed, I should add the view which it commands, for that is magnificent and beautiful beyond

all idea. The fatigue is, I assure you, very severe, for it is not only almost perpendicular, but composed of a soft loose ash which slips from your footsteps as fast as you advance, and doubles your labour. However, I felt no ill effects the next day, and much less stiff than I expected. In short, I almost think myself equal to a day upon the moors, and superior to a fox-chase.

'Your new nephew is a fine chopping boy, and will be called Hedworth, for Lady Anne says, tho' she likes Mr. Ralph very much, yet she cannot like his name. I suppose we must propose to Sir Hedworth Williamson to take upon him his puerile sins, tho' I imagine the poor nurse may whistle for her fee, if she waits for his. The children, thank God, all in perfect health. They are now by my side, somewhat noisy, tho' with books in their hands. John says he will write to his uncle sometime after he is five years old, an epoch to which he seems to look with great expectation, believing it, I fancy, at a very great distance, and at least the period of manhood, for writing, reading, fox-hunting, and the Lord knows what is to take place immediately upon its arrival.

'I have never had one line from Fenwick. You are about, I perceive, to furnish Mr. Pitt with ten million more for this accursed war. I sincerely congratulate old England on Jervis's glorious victory of the 14th of February. [The defeat of the French and Spanish fleets off Cape St. Vincent.] A report prevailed yesterday of his having had a second engagement and captured eight line-of-battle ships. Adieu. I have imperceptibly swelled this out into a tolerably fair letter. So God bless you, and believe me,

'Very truly and affectionately yours,

'W. H. Lambton.'

In the late spring Lambton journeyed to Rome, and

under date of June 14, 1797, we find him writing from that city. 'Surely the voice of reason, and, shortly after, that of justice will sound loudly in the ears of our infatuated governors. My patience is exhausted, and it is truly unpleasant to feel almost a contempt for my countrymen. The times are interesting, and I am often anxious to be upon the spot, nor do I believe any personal consideration would prevent my immediate return, but I am detained by my five little companions, whom I could not venture at this season to travel so far with. You may well imagine nothing but real necessity would have brought me to a place of very dubious character as to its salubrity during the summer months, but I was thoroughly convinced where I was had proved very prejudicial not only to my health, but to that of the whole family. To these reasons of health I may also add others of a political nature which hurried my departure. In the first place, of all the abominably tyrannical governments under the sun I believe that of Naples to be the worst. I could not endure it—nor do I believe the people will long, particularly if the French, as there is reason to believe, propose marching an army there, under the pretence of their not having fulfilled the secret articles of their Peace. For one, I shall never pity them, come what may. They are weak, foolish, puerile tyrants, and deserve the rod more than the guillotine.'

For a time his health seemed to revive in Rome, and the aspect, as of fallen majesty, of the Eternal City impressed him, as it does all imaginative minds. He kept up a brisk correspondence with his brother, and it is evident from his letters that he took to the last a keen practical interest in business affairs, as well as in those large questions of public policy which were agitating not merely England but Europe. His vivid artless letters are too lengthy to print as they stand,

though a few sentences from them deserve to be recorded. Here, for instance, is a pathetic little note, which bears date July 15, 1797, and reveals the writer's settled hatred of political tyranny, and almost in the same breath the wistfulness of a stranger, whose strength was waning, to escape from alien skies.

'I am delighted with Rome, and as comfortable and happy as it is possible to be so many miles from home. Yet why talk of home? Upon my conscience, I am almost afraid it will be impossible to live under the hourly increasing despotism of England. As a stranger, I should not mind a residence even in St. Petersburg, but as an Englishman, who once had a right to be and to call himself the native of a free country, I despair of conforming to the new system of things. Indeed, you make my mouth water about the grounds at Lambton. I long to see them, however dubious I may be how far I may be able to enjoy them.'

There are allusions in the next letter, written from Rome a fortnight later, to negotiations which were then in progress for the sale of his house in Berkeley Square, and then to such topics of the hour as the fresh storm which was brewing in France, the military tactics of Bonaparte and the prospects of peace in Europe. Then, with a touch of his old vigour, follows the pithy comment, 'Nothing but revolutions are talked of. God knows they are much wanted!' Sometimes we find him writing bitter things against himself, though those who were at his side and witnessed from day to day his cheerful fortitude were able to tell a different tale.

'*Rome, October 6th*, 1797.—My wife and children, thanks to the Omnipotent, enjoy perfect health, so that, when I reflect how multiplied might be my evils, I ought to drown in my gratitude my private sufferings. But, like the rest of the world, I am a discontented, grumbling beast, infinitely more given to complaint than thanksgiving.'

Unluckily, as the autumn advanced, Mr. Lambton was seized with malarial fever, and he had no strength left to fight against so subtle and treacherous a foe, though even his devoted wife seems scarcely to have realised his critical condition. That, at least, is the impression which lies on the surface of the following letter, which bears marks of having been written in urgent haste. Perhaps Lady Anne feared more than she dared express, for her dying husband's eyes were on the paper, and he himself read what she had written, and then added on the same sheet in a trembling, almost illegible hand, the last words he ever wrote.

'Siena: November 24.

'My dear Mr. Ralph,—Mr. Lambton continues mending, and, finding the cold weather likely to set in, we propose leaving this place for Pisa to-morrow, having taken apartments in the warmest situation. By the next post I will write, when I hope to be able to say the journey and change of air have been of use to him. He has had no intermittent fever these twelve days, and his appetite tolerably good, and certainly has gained flesh, but still very weak, but after so tedious and long an illness it is not surprising. God bless you, you shall hear from me constantly.

'Yours most affectionately,

'ANNE BARBARA LAMBTON.

'Ralph Lambton, Esq.'

'My dear Ralph,—I wish I could think myself gaining strength so fast, but the degrees are very slow, and I tremble for an attack on the old weak parts. I would give the world Beddoes was with me! Just show Wilkinson this my handwriting. More I cannot attempt. Again soon.

'Yours ever,

'W. H. LAMBTON.'

What deep human longing lies behind the simple words, 'I would give the world Beddoes was with me.' The Bristol physician at that very moment was preparing to start for Italy to the help of his friend. There is a letter of his in existence which states, 'I am pressed in a manner not to be resisted to set off for Italy to see Lambton, whom the Italian doctors have suffered almost to die of an ague. If no fresh letters arrive forbidding me, I shall start for Hamburg the week after next.' Before closing the letter, however, tidings came that his services were no longer required. He had, that instant, he adds, received the melancholy news of Mr. Lambton's death, which occurred at Pisa on November 30, 1797, six days after the short final note, with which this correspondence ends, was written. He was buried in the English Cemetery at Leghorn, and after that sad ceremony Lady Anne and her five little children crossed Europe by easy stages, under the care of Mr. Ralph Lambton, who had hurried to Italy to help them in their distress.

Dr. Beddoes made no secret of the peculiar regard which he felt for a man who had long been his friend as well as his patient, and was cut down by death at the age of thirty-three, at a moment when he seemed to stand on the threshold of a distinguished career. He admired Mr. Lambton's manly vigour of mind, the liberality of his sentiments, and the kindliness of a heart, which the possession of great wealth was incapable of corrupting. When, on one of the dark days before Christmas, in that restless, anxious year 1797, the letter came which told him that his friend's brave struggle was over, Beddoes exclaimed, 'Lambton is dead! He was the best man that I ever knew, or that, in his sphere of life, I ever shall know.' The private worth and public integrity of William Henry Lambton called forth many expressions of regret at his early death.

When deep human longing lies behind the simple words, 'I would give the world Beddoes was with me.' The friend physician at that very moment was preparing to start for Italy on the help of his friend. There is a letter of his to Wedgwood which states, 'I am pressed in a manner not to be resisted to set off for Italy to see Lambton, whose wife and sister have suffered almost to die of an ague. If no fresh letters arrive forbidding me, I shall start for Hamburg the week after next.' Before closing the letter, however, tidings came that his services were no longer required. He had, that instant, by which received the melancholy news of Mr. Lambton's death, which occurred at Pisa on November 30, 1797, six days after the short final note, with which this correspondence ends, was written. He was buried in the English Cemetery at Leghorn, and after that sad ceremony Lady Anne and her five little children crossed Europe by easy stages, under the care of Mr. Ralph Lambton, who had hurried to Italy to help them in their distress.

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William Henry Lambton. M.P.

Whitbread declared at the time that every member of the small Liberal Party in the House of Commons recognised with 'sincerity of sorrow' the great loss which the cause of progress had sustained. The words which Burke used regarding Fox might have been applied with equal truth to Lambton, 'He was a man made to be loved.' In his case, as in that of many another sensitive and finely equipped man, keenly alive to the needs of England, the sword was too sharp for the scabbard. William Henry Lambton was not merely in name, but in deed and in truth one of 'The Friends of the People.' His untimely end was a public calamity, but his son was worthy of him, and was destined to play a great part in the coming century in the affairs of the nation.

CHAPTER III

EARLY YEARS

All that we have not at our birth, and that we stand in need of in the years of maturity, is the gift of education.—Rousseau.

Childhood—Birth of a famous contemporary—Lambton and his brother committed to the care of Dr. Beddoes—Humphry Davy—Beddoes' methods of training—Lambton's boyish traits—Classics *versus* Science—'Market price of Latin and Greek'—Education of the rich—Lambton and his brother at Eton—Dr. Goodall's faulty system—Lambton's schoolfellows at Eton—Question of a University training—Thomas Wilkinson—Lambton enters the Army—In the toils of an impostor—Romantic marriage.

JOHN GEORGE LAMBTON, first Earl of Durham, was born at his father's town house, 14 Berkeley Square, on April 12, 1792. His name was suggested by those of his two grandfathers, General John Lambton and George Villiers, fourth Earl of Jersey. On the night before the child's birth his father, Mr. William Henry Lambton, M.P., was taking a prominent part at the Freemasons' Tavern at a meeting to discuss the formation of the Society of the Friends of the People, and a fortnight later, as Chairman of this new political alliance, he signed the famous Declaration which explained the principles of the association, and pledged its members to the cause of Parliamentary Reform.

By a strange but significant coincidence the same page of the 'Annual Register' records the birth of another child, scarcely a mile away, who also was destined to play a great part in the approaching struggle for political freedom, and whose father was also one of the earliest and most active members of The Friends of the

People. Lord John Russell was born in Mayfair on August 18 in that year, 1792, and was therefore only four months younger than John George Lambton. Those two children were destined to carry out the work which their fathers began, for Durham and Russell were the leading members of the historic Committee of Four which drew up that epoch-making measure, the First Reform Bill, which became law in 1832. They entered Parliament in the same year, worked side by side for a term of years in political life, and were colleagues in the Grey Administration. Lord John Russell was one of the most steadfast, though not one of the most intimate, of Lord Durham's friends. They began life together, but the one outlived the other by more than the lifetime of a generation.

When John George Lambton was still a child in the cradle, his grandfather, General Lambton, was offered a peerage at the time when the Duke of Portland joined Pitt in 1793. He refused the proffered honour, because his political sympathies were with Fox, whose cause he refused to abandon.

The earliest allusions to the child occur in the letters from abroad which Mr. W. H. Lambton wrote during the sojourn in Italy in 1796–97, which terminated with his death at Pisa. John was the oldest of the little travellers, and already a quick-tempered, impulsive child, attractive enough to run considerable risks of being spoiled. In one of his father's letters, written from Naples in the beginning of 1797, occur these words: 'Your friend John grows very fast; Bill, on the contrary, means to ride a feather-weight. However, children shoot up so suddenly that there is no judging. Fanny improves in her amiability. Of her exterior, I will say nothing but, si je ne me trompe pas, it promises well. Henry is rosy and robust as a little Hercules. There you have an account of them all.

God grant I may never have occasion to give one more unfavourable.'

In another letter, written when the child was still only five, Mr. Lambton expresses his pleasure at John's quickness, and refers with pardonable pride to a certain 'famous letter' which the young scribe had just written. There are in existence some letters written by the child at that tender age to his uncle Ralph. One in particular, dated from Rome, gives the little fellow's impressions of St. Peter's, and states that he saw the illuminations in the city. He expresses admiration for the Villa Borghese, and adds the announcement, 'I will ride a pony as soon as I come to England.' It is a surprising epistle for a child of five, and on the same sheet Mr. Lambton states, 'I send you a letter from John, totally of his own dictating, without a single hint from anybody. The first page is tolerably well written, but we cannot say much for the second—in fact he was left too much to himself, and forgot those necessary occasional hints of keeping all his letters in the same direction. He says he hopes you will excuse him, as he means to take more pains in the next. I assure you he is an excellent boy, minds what is said to him, reads like a man, and rides his ass like a little hero.' There are neither blots nor bad spelling in these letters, and the writing is singularly clear and well formed.

After Mr. Lambton's death and the return of Lady Anne with her children from Italy, a family council was held, and it was determined by Mr. Ralph Lambton and Mr. Thomas Wilkinson of Bishop Auckland—the guardians under the will—to place the two elder boys, with their mother's consent, under the care of Dr. Beddoes at Clifton. The wisdom of this decision was afterwards made plain by results, for the elder brother's guiding principles of manhood were first imparted under the roof of Dr. Beddoes. Mr. Lambton had ex-

John Hoppner R.A. pinx.

Lady Anne Lambton and children

The boy with sword is John George Lambton

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pressed a strong repugnance to sending his sons, as young children, to a public school, since his own experiences as a child had inspired him with memories which were more vivid than pleasant. The children were delicate moreover, and therefore the medical advice of Dr. Beddoes was sought on their behalf. He was invited to Lambton Castle and requested to give instructions as to the best means of warding off any possible attack of the insidious disease, to which Mr. Lambton had just fallen a victim, and which had attacked other members of his family. Then the subject of education was broached, and a proposal was made to the busy, versatile physician to receive the two elder boys into his house, in order that he might not only watch their physical health, but overlook their moral training, and educate them on a broad, enlightened plan, which in those days, at least, found no favour in the great public schools.

Dr. Beddoes was both startled and gratified at the proposal, but he wisely determined not to accept such a task on the impulse of the moment. His eminence as a physician had given him, even in the few years of his residence at Bristol, the largest and most lucrative practice in the West of England. The reputation of Beddoes in the treatment of consumption was so great that patients from all parts of Europe were beginning to seek his advice. He had already founded at Hot Wells the once well-known 'Pneumatic Institute,' and had just engaged the services of Humphry Davy, a clever young assistant of an apothecary at Penzance, to work under his directions in the task of experimental research. Dr. Beddoes lived in considerable style at Rodney Place, and was happily married to a younger sister of Maria Edgeworth. Mrs. Beddoes was a woman of great charm of character, and she seems to have impressed everyone who knew her by her rare union

of thoughtful sympathy and vivacity of speech. She was keenly interested in her husband's scientific pursuits, and delighted in the intellectual society which gathered around him in those busy years of professional eminence and widening fame.

The care of young children was a responsibility which so busy and prosperous a man might well have declined, even when, as in this case, ample financial acknowledgment of his services was proposed. The deep regard and, indeed, affection in which he held Mr. Lambton's memory, and the desire to test on such quick and promising pupils his own theories on education, led him to take the young Lambtons under his own roof, in order that he might direct and supplement the lessons given them by their tutors. Mr. Lambton had often expressed the wish to him that his eldest boy, notwithstanding his large expectations, should be trained in habits of self-reliance, as well as in a practical, common-sense manner. 'I am very far from thinking,' wrote Dr. Beddoes, 'that we can come up to perfection in educating these boys, but who can? and if in such times we may depend upon the stability of property, it would be a matter of some consequence to give to a young man of immense fortune some inclination and power to be useful.'

John George Lambton, at the age of six, accompanied by his younger brother William Henry, was sent to Bristol in the spring of 1798, and remained under Dr. Beddoes' care for several years, until, indeed, they went, as well-equipped schoolboys, to Eton. Quite a number of letters which Dr. Beddoes wrote about the boys to their guardian, Mr. Wilkinson, have fortunately been preserved amongst the Lambton papers, and they show that Humphry Davy was right in describing the bright little fellows who romped and chattered in his master's house, as 'very fine children.' The letters are very interesting, not merely because they bring vividly into view

young Lambton himself, but also because they throw light upon the attractive personality of their teacher, and on the advanced method of education which he had the courage to adopt at a time when scarcely anyone ventured to take in such directions an independent course, much less directly to challenge old-established traditions.

Out of one of the earliest of these frank, unconventional epistles, bearing date October 21, 1798, it is enough to cite the following passage: 'Although John is less prepossessing than Billy, yet I think him not inferior in talents or disposition, and very little in quickness. I certainly have not seen two boys of greater promise, and I doubt not but John, if he lives—and property remains as it is at present—will be a most valuable member of society and a happy man. If property goes to wreck, he will, I trust, be rendered less helpless than persons in his rank of life have commonly been. I have lately written two dramatic pieces for them—one to show the effect produced by money in society, and its proper uses. They enjoyed it much, and of their own accord took up the characters and repeated the ideas. They make rapid strides in French, and will easily conquer as many languages as they encounter. The main thing soon will be to teach them something of the nature of the world about them, minerals, plants, &c. I should like to converse with you on this subject, for the chemical and mechanical parts of this instruction will and ought to be expensive. After a time, when they have acquired many clear ideas of natural objects, their heads will be strong enough for the moral relations—of which they will learn something practically beforehand, by relieving the poor, &c. Next to a blind understanding I reckon a one-eyed understanding the greatest evil of this kind. So I think they should acquire as diversified ideas as are consistent with perfect distinctness.'

There is no picture of the childhood of Lord Durham which serves so well as an aid to the interpretation of his career as that which is contained in a letter, which deserves to be quoted exactly as it stands:

'Clifton: December 2, 1798.

'My dear Sir,—Not many days ago I put into Lady Anne's hands a paper which I myself consider of the utmost importance to your two promising little wards. The character of John is very uncommon. I think him as capable of going far in good or bad as any human being I have ever beheld. I think the better of him for this capability. We must only take care that his propensity to enthusiasm does not take the turn of debauchery at school or college, or of gambling in after life. I will tell you a few of the many facts, from which I conclude he would stick at nothing if this were to be the case. When his mother comes from Bath, where she has chiefly been of late, he is absolutely intoxicated. He talks, laughs, acts and cries just like a person in liquor. The two boys and Mary Anne—Mr. Ralph will tell you who she is—play at certain little games with a French master, in order to acquire French more pleasantly. The other two are cheerful, and no more. John is quite delirious. His eyes are on fire, his cheeks flushed, and in the paroxysm I have little doubt but he would run against a drawn sword, or jump down a precipice.

'I once thought him obstinate, but I am quite convinced he is never so, if by obstinacy we mean persisting in a thing because he has begun upon it and because he is desired to desist, feeling it at the same time to be wrong. When he receives a strong, disagreeable impression, it overpowers and takes possession of him, just like one of a contrary kind; and in this state of absorption by his own feelings he has sometimes the

appearance of being obstinate. Two or three days ago he went to see a Lady Holte, who is here, old and jaundiced. Mrs. Beddoes had told him, she looked very ill, but was very sensible and good-natured. That day she was of a blackish-yellow, and her deshabille did not set her off to any advantage. Notwithstanding the previous information, the moment John beheld her he turned short round and would not be persuaded to go near her. Afterwards, Mrs. Beddoes told him, to be sure she looked disagreeably, but she would be glad to get rid of her yellowness, and that by the same rule he himself might die, if nobody would go near him in case he had a disagreeable complaint. He seemed very sensible of all this, and next day Lady Holte, happening to stop at my door, he went up to her and told her he was sorry he had behaved so ill.

'If this boy had been abused or beaten as being obstinate on this or similar occasions, he would have become so, and, by such treatment continued, would turn out as malicious a tyrant as any the North of England is blessed with. But a very little conversation will lead him to correct himself; he is reasonable beyond what one could expect at his age. To prevent his intense feelings from hurrying him, in after life, into excesses ruinous to his health or fortune is the point to be gradually accomplished. I know nothing so capable of counterpoising this enthusiastic turn as a clear insight into things on the principle described in the letter transmitted through Lady Anne. He should also learn a good deal of arithmetic. I would not wish the spirit of his character changed. Both boys are very hearty and very happy, learning their French and everything else put to them rapidly.

'I am, dear Sir, yours, with great truth,

'THOMAS BEDDOES.

'Thomas Wilkinson, Esq.'

The quick, impetuous, generous boy was allowed a degree of liberty in Dr. Beddoes' house, which in those days, when children were kept, for the most part, rigidly in the background, was remarkable. Though somewhat brusque in his manners amongst the men of his acquaintance, Dr. Beddoes did everything in his power to set the children about him at their ease. He recognised John Lambton's constitutional shyness, which had been increased by the harsh treatment which the child, unknown to his parents, had received from a servant. He was convinced that, in the case of sensitive children, the optative mood might be substituted with advantage for the imperative, and he certainly adopted it in his intercourse with these children with happy results. One command only was peremptory, and that was that they must give their whole mind to whatever they were doing. He gave them a most liberal allowance of play, but always with the stipulation that they were not to loiter or go listlessly through with it. He held stoutly to the old doctrine that idleness was the mother of all moral mischief, and therefore he sternly discountenanced all lounging, or gazing about with listless indifference.

The most intellectual people in Bristol constantly crossed that threshold, and the children, under certain wise restrictions, were allowed to converse with them. Dr. Beddoes' personal friends were accustomed to say that the busy physician never appeared to enjoy himself more completely than in the years when the young Lambtons were under his roof. Whenever circumstances rendered it necessary for Dr. Beddoes to make a journey from Clifton, the Lambton children were his constant companions, and he lost no opportunity on these occasions of awakening their minds to the beauty of scenery or the poetry of association. His aim was to awaken the faculty of observation, to draw out their

own powers, to evoke self-reliance, and to give them clean-cut ideas of everything. As a rule, they studied in the morning under visiting tutors, and the course of instruction included, not merely English and the classics, but mathematics, chemistry, anatomy, and mechanics. They were also taught to work in brass, and were able to master the principles involved in the construction of machinery.

Dr. Beddoes devoted the later hours of the afternoon, when he was usually free from professional interruptions, to personal instruction. He did this in a bright, informal way, never assuming the air of a tutor, and always encouraging the boys to express frankly their own ideas. His sense of humour and quiet sympathy drew out the children in eager talk, and in this way he obtained a knowledge of the directions in which their strength and weakness lay, to which, otherwise, he would have remained a stranger. 'If you remember,' he writes to Mr. Wilkinson in August 1800, 'the boys began Latin last October, what should you suppose may be their efficiency? I think that they understand the grounds and construction most perfectly, as far as they have gone, and by October next I will answer for their getting with the most perfect ease a lesson in Ovid's "Metamorphoses." Would you believe that they tease me half a dozen times a day to let them read Ovid to me, and to help them out where they are at loss. I myself read them a few lines every day. They were captivated with the story of Phaeton, and now they apprehend many passages, which they have never seen before, immediately on reading them. We have lost Monsieur D'Estrade, but got, I think, a still better master in his stead. This new master says they are the most intelligent children he ever saw, and that coming from others to teach them is quite a recreation.'

Dr. Beddoes believed that every boy ought to be

able to use his hands, and to be made to master the rudiments of science. He thought that the strictly classical education, which was then in vogue, left the average lad with little ability to meet the practical demands of life. The French Revolution, moreover, had led him to think that landowners and other men of wealth in this country held their possessions on a very uncertain tenure, and he felt certain that the policy of political repression which prevailed was destined, if persisted in, to end in a rude awakening of the privileged classes. He therefore sought to prepare the children of his dead friend for a possible reversal of fortune, and, at all events, to bring them into intelligent touch with the new forces of scientific research and mechanical discovery, which were already bringing about an industrial and social revolution.

He seems not to have lost sight for a moment of the fact that education, either at Clifton or at Eton, was only a means to an end, and his letters show how constantly he kept before him the welfare, in coming years, of the children who had been committed to his trust. 'I should like much to converse with you on education,' are his words to Mr. Wilkinson in the spring of 1801; 'I should like to know why you think a smaller school than Eton disadvantageous until the boys are thirteen or fourteen. It would be equally tiresome and useless to discuss this point by letter. I remember their father most firmly resolving not to send them young to a public school, and I am persuaded that his esteem for the discipline of these seminaries would have daily declined. They are probably very ill-adapted for preparing young persons for those times in which John and William will have to live and act, for surely a person of your liberal spirit cannot suppose that to spend much of the best years of a young man on Hexameters and Pentameters,

Alcaics and Sapphics is the proper sphere for the human understanding. I would have these boys good classics, and I think they would be found to have the best classical taste of any boys in England of their standing, but they should surely be taught those sciences, which their father began to learn late in life, and which he so much desired that they should learn—sciences which are almost the principal hinges on which the world turns, and which will every day overgrow mere Greek and Latin in importance. I beg your pardon for this intrusion of my thoughts. I did not intend it, but as John and William will make two of the most useful and conspicuous members of society if—excuse me for repeating it—their father's ideas are followed, I could not help pouring out my feelings when writing to a person upon whom it so much depends whether they shall attain what they are capable of or not. I hope you will not suppose that I despise classical attainments. No one has had the passion upon him more strongly, but, having studied other things, I can make a comparison, and as one of the best scholars in Dr. Barnard's time, and a firm friend of Lambton, has just observed to me, "Our system of education is incredibly absurd. Upon leaving a public school with reputation as a scholar, a young man of any sense will feel that he knows nothing which can be of the least use to him. The idea in many minds must produce despair and dissipation, if the habit has not been already established."'

A week or two later—April 17, 1801—Dr. Beddoes reverts, with characteristic vigour and frankness, to the subject of education, and then goes on to speak in the following terms of the character of the pupil who was destined to do him so much credit, 'Narrowness —or niggardliness, rather—in the education of children destined to great fortunes is almost universal. The

property is regarded as the principal, and the person the accessory. Hence the frequent wretched fate of country gentlemen, who either perish prematurely, or are tortured all their lives by the consequences of intemperance, or by the pains or penalties of idleness, all of which evils most schools promote. I am persuaded, had Mr. Lambton's mind been as early awakened as the minds of these boys, he would now have been alive and occupied about those useful objects which he latterly meditated. He used to impute the first blow to his constitution to school and college temptations.

'John, I think, exceeds any child I ever saw in industry, intelligence, and active curiosity. Had he gone to school and been cowed at first, as from his shyness he easily might, his understanding and character would both have been ruined, and still he may be injured unless he is peculiarly managed at first going to school. Respecting his constitution, I explained fully the nature of that to Mr. Ralph, who mentioned it to me, and I will save you the repetition of remarks, which evidently show, from confirmative and positive symptoms, he is disposed to the malady of his father and grandmother. There are past and present ties which will never lose their influence on my mind. These make me very ardently wish the good of these children.' He declared that if their father was conscious in another world of what was taking place on earth, his children were progressing in a manner to call forth his warmest approbation. 'Their proficiency in Latin,' he adds, 'astonishes everybody, and those the most who have the most experience in education.' There are in existence boyish translations of Horace and other classical authors, in John Lambton's neat and attractive handwriting, which by their grace and skill bear out the truth of this assertion.

Dr. Beddoes was determined to make them, as far

as opportunity served, elegant classical scholars, though he confessed that when he looked at the political horizon and the course the world was taking he was firmly persuaded that the 'market price of Latin and Greek would sink very low before these boys arrived at manhood.' A year later, in reply to a letter in which their guardian had expressed his approval of the progress which the lads had made, Dr. Beddoes remarks: 'I am glad that your opinion of the two boys agrees with that of every person who has seen and examined them. I certainly lay no small stress upon the approbation of their father's principal friend. I have put them on a course of arithmetic and mathematics, with chemistry and natural philosophy occasionally. They like algebra extremely, and all the rest is play.

'I hope to qualify them for men of public and private business, and also by occupying their minds with useful knowledge to secure them a good moral character. I wish most sincerely to keep them till May 1803, as I cannot finish my plan in less time. You know—at least, I presume you know—that I have put things on such a footing that all parties must feel it impossible that this can be an interested wish of mine. The great thing men of sense value school for is the knowledge of character and conduct it gives, and I would challenge Eton and Westminster to produce me two boys of their age who have so much insight into the persons about them, or could go through the world like John and William Lambton. Indeed, I think the variety of scenes and of persons they have seen, and the conversations they have had access to, have given them a superiority far more valuable than their superiority in classical attainments.'

In the autumn of 1802, Dr. Beddoes wrote to Lady Anne Lambton and also to Mr. Wilkinson, strongly urging the desirability in the case of John George of

a more studied course of scientific instruction. 'His mind is excessively active, and I think unless you help him on as it must be employed, there is reason to fear it may turn to mischief. If he were to get into that sort of vicious idleness which, I understand, has risen to a dreadful pitch among the oppidans of a certain large school, I am sure that in a few years he would feel bitter regret, and probably would reproach his friends when he found himself fallen back in information and perhaps injured in constitution. I remember Mr. Lambton regretting that he had not been instructed in science, and resolving to make up the defect shortly before his death. The spirit of reflection is so strong in John that I am sure it will never be quelled, though it may hereafter serve but to torment him. He never can forget that at ten and a half he could write Latin and Greek, both prose and verse, that he was advanced in arithmetic, algebra, Euclid, and that he was beginning to have information in chemistry and some other sciences.

'I am sure that at twenty-one, or sooner, he will compare himself with what he now is, and, if he finds himself wanting, feel unhappy. . . You will not be willing, perhaps, to look so far forward as I do, but you know the years that are to make these boys men will soon arrive, and I will venture to say that if you will look round among the men of fortune of your acquaintance, you will see that not a moment should be lost in preventing John from becoming what they usually are. I have known a great number, and been accurately acquainted with the reasons why they were either cut off young, or crippled, or reduced to premature old age. I am persuaded they would have been long-lived and healthy if they had been educated upon some such plan as has been followed with regard to your boys. But they did not know what to do with

their time, and so their wealth was their bane. I think nothing can be such a reproach to the parents and guardians of great heirs in general as the vast admiration paid to the Duke of Bedford's memory. Is it such a mighty matter to discover that a rich man, who employs his means most usefully to the public, will derive most satisfaction to himself? and is it so hard a thing to put a child's mind into that train, from which he shall derive this sort of satisfaction? In the richest country in the world, one Duke has the head and the heart to exert his influence beneficially. What a reproach to other great proprietors is the applause given to this one! does it not say aloud that they are good for nothing?'

When at length the time came for the boys to begin their career at Eton, Dr. Beddoes was able to relinquish his task with an honourable sense of satisfaction. 'I rejoice that their range of information, power of invention, manual dexterity—everything, in short, likely to make them adorn prosperity or support adversity—is in proportion to their classical attainments.' He, more than any other man, awakened the intelligence of John George Lambton, and inspired him with a hatred of tyranny and oppression.

Eton, in 1805, when John George Lambton went thither, though an aristocratic, was by no means a model school. Dr. Joseph Goodall had been head master for the space of four years, and he remained in that position during the whole term of young Lambton's stay. He was not in any sense of the word a great schoolmaster, and his two immediate successors, Keate and Hawtrey, made a much deeper impression on the life of the school. Keate was an assistant master, and Hawtrey was in the sixth form when John George Lambton, in his thirteenth year, entered the school and was found worthy of admission to a place in the lower

division of the fifth form. Discipline was deplorably lax under Goodall. There is a tradition that Ascot races were regularly frequented by many of the elder boys, whilst hunting, and the driving of horses in smart tandem fashion were also in vogue amongst a certain set. Dr. Goodall was a mild-mannered, fastidious scholar, courteous and hospitable, who took life easily and was not consumed with moral enthusiasm. He was rigidly conservative in his methods, and was commonly believed to be inflexibly opposed to changes, which he regarded as dangerous innovations. Hawtrey always expressed his own sense of indebtedness to Goodall, whom he persisted in regarding as a teacher who 'caught at the first symptom of merit and had the art, to a remarkable degree, of stirring up latent powers.' Nevertheless, the average boy undoubtedly fared badly under Goodall, and was allowed a degree of liberty which too often ran to actual licence.

Goodall was too weak to arrest the spirit of insubordination which prevailed in the school, and the manners, and, to some extent, the morals of Eton declined under his sway. He was an accomplished courtier, and George III. held him in much regard. He was credited, moreover, with being somewhat blind to the shortcomings of his more aristocratic pupils, and few men in authority paid more homage to the peerage, present and prospective. Fortunately, Keate ruled the lower school, and if he was harsh, and at times despotic, he did much to prevent the younger boys from following the example of their seniors, and when he became, in turn, head master, in the year after Lambton left, he proved himself to be a resolute disciplinarian, and quelled, by persistent flogging, the disorderly and lawless manners which had grown up under Goodall. It was left to Hawtrey, however, to bring about an epoch of reform, and to evoke a lofty tone in the school, for,

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John George Lambton,
at age of 12
From a miniature in possession of the Earl of Durham

as his monument in the College Chapel records, by trusting the lads under him and appealing to their self-respect 'he made proverbial the honour of an Eton boy.'

If Keate quelled the rebellious spirit of the place, it was Hawtrey who broadened its culture and refined its manners; and, indeed, it has been well said, 'Keate felled the trees, but Hawtrey cultivated the soil.'

Lambton's private tutor was Francis Hodgson, an intimate friend of Lord Byron, and it is worthy of remark that Dr. Hodgson was Provost of Eton when his old pupil died in 1840. Surprisingly little is known of Lambton's experiences at Eton. He was at the school from his thirteenth to his sixteenth year, but unfortunately, his letters, neither to his mother, Lady Anne Lambton, nor to his guardians, Mr. Ralph Lambton and Mr. Wilkinson, have been preserved. His name of course occurs in the usual school-lists, but, in spite of his skill in Latin verse and his proficiency in scientific knowledge, he scarcely seems to have made any mark. There is a somewhat stilted reference to him in a book which gathers up personal facts concerning famous Etonians. It states that Lambton did not display much 'literary brilliancy,' though it adds that his course at Eton showed that he was even then inclined to 'support popular, rather than oligarchical principles of government.'

Perhaps the two most remarkable of his contemporaries at Eton were Percy Bysshe Shelley and Stratford Canning, afterwards Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, and, amongst other lads who were destined to make a name in the world were John Taylor Coleridge, Henry Hart Milman, Charles Sumner, afterwards Bishop of Winchester, and Stephen Fox, who for a term of years was English Ambassador to the United States.

Lambton left Eton at Christmas 1808, and had scarcely reached his home in the north when he was

startled by unexpected tidings. Dr. Beddoes died on December 24 in that year, and his closing days were clouded with the sense of disappointment, if not of defeat. Some of his ambitious schemes had entirely miscarried, and, though he had intermeddled with all knowledge, he lacked the patience, and, indeed, the exactitude, which are imperative in research. It has often been said that Humphry Davy's greatest discovery was Michael Faraday, and it ought not to be forgotten that Dr. Beddoes was the first to call away the young chemist of Penzance from the humble duties of an apothecary's shop, and to give him the opportunity of leisured research in a well-equipped laboratory. 'Dr. Beddoes had talents,' said Sir Humphry Davy, 'which would have exalted him to the pinnacle of philosophical eminence—if they had been applied with discretion.' He was only forty-eight when he died, and his son, Thomas Lovell Beddoes, destined to make a name in the world as a dramatist, was a child of five. Humphry Davy and John George Lambton were to meet again after the lapse of a few years, and meanwhile they were one in the sense of personal indebtedness to Dr. Beddoes, and in sorrow over his untimely death.

With the beginning of a new year the question of a University had to be considered, and young Lambton's guardians appear to have hesitated between sending him to Cambridge, and placing him at Edinburgh under the care of Professor Dugald Stewart. Edinburgh at that time was full of strenuous intellectual life, and the atmosphere of its University, in marked contrast with that of Oxford and Cambridge, was liberal and enlightened. The Duke of Bedford made no secret of his conviction that nothing was to be learnt at the English Universities in the opening decades of the last century, and in the very year that a decision about young Lambton's

further education had to be taken he sent Lord John Russell to the northern University. Lord John was placed under the roof of Professor Playfair, and if John George Lambton had gone to the house of Professor Dugald Stewart, two youths, who, as men, were brought into close political association, would have met in familiar intercourse within and without the walls of the University. Whilst the question of Edinburgh or Cambridge was still unsettled, Lambton announced to his guardians that he had determined upon another and an entirely different course. England was struggling against the ascendency of Napoleon, and Europe was full of the clash of arms; no wonder, therefore, that the high-spirited lad of seventeen caught the patriotic enthusiasm of the hour, and resolved to adopt a military career. As soon as this decision was taken, he sent two letters in quick succession to his guardian, Mr. Wilkinson, and they drew from him a sensible and energetic protest.

'Neubus Grange: May 22, 1809.

'My dear John,—Your two letters have reached me safely. The contents of the latter have surprised me not a little. Upon the choice of a profession I think now, as I always did, and as I stated to you in London, that it should be left free and open to every young man; and, accordingly, if you have bent your inclination upon the army, and have made up your mind to it after duly and fairly weighing all its advantages and disadvantages, and think you can be happier and more respectable as a soldier than in the quiet possession and enjoyment of all that Providence has blessed you with at home, I do not feel that I, as your guardian, have either the authority or the right to oppose your choice. But it is my duty, notwithstanding, to give you my advice upon so important a point, and, be your determination what it may, still to endeavour to guide you

in those pursuits which I deem most beneficial for you. I therefore cannot help saying that I quite disapprove of the step you are meditating, and think you will at some future day most grievously repent the adoption of it.

'With you there can be no necessity for a profession at all—but if you are desirous of engaging in one, why select so hard and trying a one as the army? Without it, every comfort this world can bestow lies open to you, and is provided ready to your hands. What is to become of your extensive concerns, and how can the attention necessary for the management of your property be given, if you are drawn off by other avocations? You can never expect to see much of Lambton, or to be a man of that weight and consequence we all wish to see you there, if your life is to be passed in the active and distant discharge of military duties. Remember, too, that if this profession be not seriously and diligently followed up, it becomes a life of idleness and dissipation, in either of which views I trust you would abhor it from the very bottom of your heart. If it be pursued as it should be, it then is of so laborious a nature, that in my opinion it will be more than your constitution is equal to, and I cannot conceive why you are to court risks, dangers, and troubles, when circumstances of life do not require it, and when by other pursuits you may render yourself more easy and happy, and may be more serviceable to your family in every sense, and more useful to your country both in a private and a public capacity.

'Feeling as I do on this subject, I am bound to give you my sentiments upon it. They are short, but, such as they are, I heartily wish they may divert you from your purpose. If, on the contrary, you still adhere to the army, I must beg you very particularly to apprize your mother and uncle, without delay, of your wishes,

who, as your more near and natural guardians, must be principally consulted in such a business, and without whose full concurrence and approbation my consent is of no avail. Indeed, if ultimately you enter this profession it must rest with them, but chiefly with your uncle, to place you there in the most eligible line, as it is not possible that I, who live so much in retirement, can have such channels of providing for you and settling you, as he must readily command from his extensive political connexions and his public situation.

'You will be kind enough to acquaint me with your final resolve in this affair, and when you have explained yourself upon it to your mother and uncle, and informed them of your having written to me (which you certainly should do) I will be obliged to you to let them see what I have stated to you in this letter. It will save me the trouble of writing the same thing over again to them, and leave me leisure for other things which at present rather press upon me.

'There is one thing I wish you to understand, which is, that the plan for placing you at Edinburgh is not given up, though somewhat changed. Dr. Stewart, it seems, has lost his son, which event has brought on the severest affliction, and owing to which his late silence must be attributed. I did all in my power to get you to Edinburgh with the greatest expedition, and if I did not succeed it must be attributed to accident, and that alone. Your uncle knows from Dr. Raine what has passed in this business, and will acquaint you with it at any time. . . .

'I cannot dismiss this letter without thanking you for the confidence you have placed in me by your ready disclosure of your sentiments as to the army. I trust you will continue that confidence in all things; and be assured, though I could have wished it otherwise, that, if you are at last to be a soldier, nothing shall be omitted

on my part to promote your happiness and honour in your profession, and by every means in my power to forward your interest and advancement.

'Believe me your affect. Guardian and sincere Friend,

'THOS. WILKINSON.'

Young Lambton seems to have lost no time in sending this letter on to his mother and his uncle, as well as in acquainting them that Mr. Wilkinson's arguments had failed to shake him from his purpose. His father had been an intimate friend of the Prince Regent. There is a letter in existence, dated from Carlton House on January 11, 1796, beginning 'Dear Lambton,' and signed, 'Your affectionate friend, George,' in which the prince announces the birth, on Tuesday, January 7, of his daughter the Princess Charlotte, and states that since those about him had neglected to send the tidings to one of his 'best and oldest friends,' he himself took up the pen to acquaint him with the event and to add that the child was at that moment as 'well as we can possibly wish her to be.'

Since the young heir of Lambton was determined to enter the army, his friends exerted their influence on his behalf. The Prince Regent was approached on the subject by Mr. Ralph Lambton, with the result that John George Lambton obtained his commission on June 8, 1809, as cornet in the Tenth Hussars, the crack regiment of the period, and commonly styled The Prince of Wales' Own. The uniform of this smart cavalry regiment of Light Dragoons consisted of a dark blue tunic, with deep yellow facings, relieved with lace, white breeches, and Hessian boots. The regiment was splendidly mounted, and Lambton, who became a lieutenant in the following year, doubtless cut a handsome figure during the two years of his service in London, Lewes, and Brighton. True to the promise contained

in the closing words of his letter of remonstrance, Mr. Wilkinson, in spite of his grave misgivings about the army as a profession, followed the career of 'Lieutenant Lambton' with almost paternal solicitude.

One of the most characteristic of his letters to 'Lieutenant Lambton, Tenth Dragoons,' written in the summer of 1810, states that Mr. Ralph Lambton himself proposed to increase the young officer's allowance to £800 a year, and this announcement is followed by a grave homily against luxury and extravagance. Mr. Wilkinson, it seems, had heard that the youth of eighteen, on the strength of his great expectations, had been purchasing oil paintings which were not to be paid for until he came of age. He therefore expresses the hope that he does not intend to 'run headlong into all the follies of the times,' and he reminds him that his knowledge of art is, to say the least, rudimentary, and that, moreover, he has little knowledge of the tricks of the world. 'I trust you will not engage in these bargains in any shape. I would almost as soon hear of you throwing yourself at once into the hands of the Jews, for both lead much to the same end.' In the same letter he explains the heavy amounts with which General Lambton and Mr. W. H. Lambton had, in turn, charged the family estate, and then he urges the necessity of prudence and caution. The conclusion of the whole matter is worth citing, especially as this is the last occasion in which the worthy guardian crosses the pages of this book. 'For God's sake, above all things avoid Newmarket, and all the consequences it usually leads to. Don't think I mean to preach to you. I only state these matters for your guidance as my duty obliges me. If you think my advice worth attending to, I shall be very happy. At all events, it is given with the best intention on my part, and from the purest regard for you.' Fortunately, in this instance, it is not necessary

to say 'there lives no record of reply.' Lieutenant Lambton, with a frankness which must have disarmed further criticism, makes open confession of his weakness in regard to the pictures.

'Lewes.

'My dear Sir,—I am much obliged to you for your letter, and hope you will never think I have any idea to slight your advice, to prove which I have written you an explanation concerning the pictures, that I may be determined by yours and my uncle's advice, to whom I have written. I wished to give my mother a portrait of myself and Fanny, and for that purpose pitched on the first painter I heard of, who unfortunately for me, has turned out a most complete rascal. When I first desired him to undertake the pictures, I give you my honour, I thought that they would be at the utmost £50 apiece. You may then conceive my astonishment, when *after* they were sent home, he informed me his constant price was £500 apiece! What was I then to do? The pictures were sent home; if I refused to accept them, he might sell them to strangers, which, as they were portraits, would have been most unpleasant. He then continually annoyed me with the most vulgar letters, to induce me to sign an acknowledgment, which at last I was obliged to do, knowing that I was utterly unable to pay that sum at present. This is the account of that transaction, into which I have fallen through my own inadvertence in not making him fix his price at first. This I have related to you, as well as to my uncle, that you may not think I wish to conceal anything from you. Indeed, I fully intended to have spoken to him (my uncle) when I saw him, as I have not seen him yet since his visit to the north.

'Believe me, Yours very sincerely,

'J. G. Lambton.'

The pictures proved to be of little value as works of art, and Mr. Ralph Lambton, with the aid of an expert, extracted his impulsive nephew from the toils of an impostor. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Lambton was growing tired of his position as a cavalry officer, especially as he saw small chance of distinction in a regiment of which the Prince Regent was Honorary Colonel, and which was officered, for the most part, by his personal friends. He formed, moreover, in the year 1811 a romantic attachment for Miss Henrietta Cholmondeley, the natural daughter of the peer of that name. Her mother was a French actress on the English stage, and the girl grew up in the home of Lord Cholmondeley, side by side with his legitimate children. Miss Cholmondeley, according to Mr. Kirkpatrick Sharpe, who declares he knew her well, was a very handsome girl, and quite outshone Lady Charlotte, her father's daughter born in wedlock. She was attractive and vivacious, but beneath the splendid bloom of her youth lurked the seeds of consumption. Young Lambton, with his good looks, his winning speech and manners, his ancient lineage, his powerful family connections, brilliant prospects in English society, and the wealth which had accumulated during his long minority, might have made a great alliance. He chose, however, instead, a marriage of pure affection, and the invidious position in which Miss Cholmondeley was placed, assuredly through no fault of her own, appealed irresistibly to the chivalrous instincts of an impressionable and generous nature.

There is no evidence that he took either his mother or Mr. Ralph Lambton into his confidence. He probably knew that his wish to marry a girl in such a position would be scouted as quite out of the question by those most closely related to him. He was still only nineteen, and therefore, in the legal sense, not his own

master. He determined, in consequence, to brave the displeasure, and possibly the chagrin, of relatives and guardians by making a runaway match. He relinquished his commission as the year was ending, and, whilst his friends were still wondering as to his motives for taking such a step, tidings of his marriage at Gretna Green ran round the town.

The young lovers took coach to Gretna Green, and were there married on January 1, 1812, by that informal parson Robert Elliot, who in later years used to boast that he had made upwards of seven thousand people happy. The 'Annual Register' records the wedding in the following terms:—'At Gretna Green, William H. Lambton, Esq., of Durham, to Miss Cholmondeley, daughter of the celebrated Madame St. Alban.' It is odd that the bridegroom should be wrongly described, as W. H. Lambton was, of course, his younger brother. Madame St. Alban, in spite of the reputation which she appears to have enjoyed in 1812, is now almost a mythical personage, and her name is not to be found in any list of musical or theatrical celebrities.

Mr. Lambton and his bride quickly found their way back to Cholmondeley Castle, and in the course of a week or two the ceremony of marriage was repeated in a more seemly and orthodox fashion in the presence of the mother of the heir of Lambton, who was now—by her second marriage with the Honourable Charles William Wyndham, brother of Lord Egremont—Lady Anne Wyndham. The following extract from the Marriage Register of the parish of Malpas, in the county of Cheshire, is worthy of quotation, since it has hitherto been supposed that only the Gretna Green ceremony took place:

'John George Lambton and Henrietta Cholmondeley, both of Cholmondeley in this parish, were married in this church by banns—published January 12th, 19th,

and 26th—this twenty-eighth day of January in the year one thousand eight hundred and twelve, by me Philip Egerton, Rector.'

'This marriage was solemnized between us } JOHN GEORGE LAMBTON. HENRIETTA CHOLMONDELEY.

'In the presence of } ANNE BARBARA FRANCES WYNDHAM. PETER BARLOW, Junr.'

There is little more to record about this marriage, except that its happiness was deep, though short-lived. Mrs. Lambton's health was from the first a matter of anxiety, and gradually, in spite of all that affection and skill could suggest, her strength visibly declined, especially after the birth of her youngest child. There were three children by this marriage, all of them daughters, who from childhood inherited the mother's delicate health. The eldest, Frances Charlotte, was the only one who lived to womanhood. She was married, by special licence, at her father's house in Cleveland Row on September 8, 1835, to the Hon. John George Ponsonby, afterwards fifth Earl of Bessborough. She died on Christmas Eve of the same year at the untimely age of twenty-three, and was buried at Piltown Church, Fiddown, Ireland, where a tablet is erected to her memory. Her younger sisters, Georgiana Sarah Elizabeth and Harriet Caroline, both died in the epoch-making year 1832—cut down ruthlessly by the blight of consumption at the ages of eighteen and seventeen respectively. Lambton's long minority ended in the spring of 1813, and he then came into possession of Lambton Castle, and the responsibilities of a landed estate and extensive collieries. His thoughts were turning more and more in the direction of public life, and his beautiful girlish wife appears to have been in full sympathy with his political ambition. She lived

long enough to see her husband, not merely enter the House of Commons, and take part in its debates, but win, by his manly speech on behalf of the people of Norway, who were then struggling against a foreign yoke, the public recognition of so competent a judge of Parliamentary eloquence as Sir James Mackintosh. Lambton Castle, though she did its honours with winning grace, was not, however, destined to be long her home, for that insidious malady, consumption, had already declared itself. All too quickly it was impossible for Lambton to hide from himself that the happiness which his impulsive marriage had brought him was likely to be of brief duration. He crossed the threshold of that public life to which, not merely the promptings of ambition, but the sense of duty called him, under the shadow of apprehension for his young wife.

CHAPTER IV

ENTRANCE INTO PUBLIC LIFE

But what is before us we know not, and we know not what shall succeed.—Matthew Arnold.

1813–1816

Announcement of political principles—In Parliament for the County of Durham—Speech at the Fox Banquet—The 'straight path of duty'—Maiden speech in the House of Commons—On Lord Grey—Denunciation of the War Tax—Annexation of Genoa to Sardinia—Sydney Smith on the political situation—Lambton's opposition to the Corn Act—Hedworth Lambton's impressions of the state of Europe—Death of Lambton's wife—Lambton aids the escape of Lafayette—Activity in Parliament—Interest in Davy's Safety Lamp—Lambton's wit—His second marriage—Lady Louisa Lambton's albums—A poem by Lord Byron.

Scarcely had John George Lambton attained his majority, in the spring of 1813, when an unexpected vacancy occurred in the representation of the county of Durham by the death of Sir Henry Vane Tempest, who for six years had sat for the constituency. The Lambtons, from the days of James II., had been more or less closely associated with this honour, and the young head of the family, urged by 'local influence,' and perhaps quite as much by personal ambition, promptly announced himself as a candidate for the vacant seat. At a great meeting held on the day of nomination —August 18, 1813—Lambton, at a time when religious bigotry was in the ascendency and political corruption was unchecked, boldly announced that for his part he was prepared to stand or fall as an advocate of civil and religious liberty. He declared that he regarded it as only just to himself, as well as only fair to the constituency,

to state frankly what were his convictions concerning the two great political questions of the day, Reform in Parliament and Catholic Emancipation. 'I am no friend, gentlemen, to wild and improbable theories, but when I see seats publicly bought and sold; when I see the majority of one night dwindle into the minority of another, without any alteration in the question before them; when I see the consequences visible in the shameless distribution of places and pensions, I grieve that there should be such a stain on the fairest Constitution any country was ever blessed with, I blush that the free name of Englishman should be associated with that venality and corruption. Nor do I consider the Catholic claims of less importance—claims, in my opinion, not only founded on the strictest principles of justice, but rendered, by the peculiar situation of the times, eminently expedient. I rest my pretensions, gentlemen, on the proud consciousness of an upright heart; and the consciousness that if I betray your rights I betray my own honour. Empty professions are worthy of neither you nor me; but I trust that should you elect me to the honourable situation to which I aspire, I never shall disgrace your choice.'

The election took place on September 20, and from that time forward to his elevation to the peerage in 1828, Lambton, though his position was again and again challenged, represented, with remarkable ability and ever widening influence, the county of Durham in the House of Commons. Two months after his nephew's election, Mr. Ralph Lambton, who had sat in Parliament as member for the city of Durham for fifteen years, felt it his duty to accept the Chiltern Hundreds, on the honourable plea that it was neither just nor expedient that one family should hold two out of four seats possessed by the county and city.

Meanwhile a great banquet had taken place at New-

castle to celebrate the anniversary of Fox's first return for Westminster, and at it Mr. John George Lambton's health was drunk with enthusiasm. His response to the toast was modest and manly. He declared that the assembly had done him not merely an unexpected, but an undeserved honour, since he was entirely an untried man. Then, adroitly turning the subject, he went on to speak of Fox, who was always one of his political heroes. He declared that the occasion was clouded by the recollection that they were not gathered to drink the great statesman's health, but to celebrate his memory. 'The lapse of years may blunt the severity of our grief, but it can never efface the remembrance of his virtues; that will live and flourish for ever, for it has taken root in a good and fruitful soil—it has taken root in the heart.'

From the outset of his career Lambton made a deep impression on all classes in the north of England. No doubt he was helped in the first instance, not so much by the fact that he was a man of ancient, and indeed, historic lineage, as by the circumstance that his family had been for generations on the side of progress and in touch with the people. He came, to borrow a homely phrase, of a good stock, and, to his honour, he quickly proved that he had other and more personal claims to public recognition. He declared that it was the 'straight path of duty' which he meant to pursue without fear or favour, and those who look back on his career during the four Parliaments in which he represented Durham in the House of Commons, cannot gainsay the statement that he might have taken 'Be just and fear not' for his motto.

Lambton entered Parliament during one of the most reactionary periods of English history, for the years which immediately preceded and followed Waterloo were marked by restlessness, tyranny and

privation. The hard, repressive policy which prevailed in the days of the Regency was, moreover, all the more irksome, because the earlier years of the reign of George III. had witnessed substantial concessions to the just demands of the people. The turn of the tide came with the panic which the French Revolution awakened in England, for the excesses which marked that great movement disheartened all timid friends of progress, and gave the enemies of liberty not only occasion to blaspheme, but opportunity to fall back stiffly on the old principle of government by coercion. Power was in the weak hands of Lord Liverpool, and Lord Castlereagh was at once the ruling spirit of his Cabinet and the evil genius of the nation. Lambton's first speech in the House of Commons struck the key-note of his whole career. The occasion was the debate on the affairs of Norway, which took place on the night of May 12, 1814. Norway, which at the beginning of the century formed part of the Danish monarchy, had been promised by the Emperor Alexander to Bernadotte, Crown Prince of Sweden, in 1812, as a reward for his aid against Napoleon, and this arrangement, with a cynical disregard of the feelings of the Norwegian people, was confirmed by the victorious allies at the Peace of Paris. The aspirations of the people after national independence were calmly set aside. Sweden marched its troops into the country, and a British fleet was even sent to assist Bernadotte in quelling the disaffection of his new subjects.

In his maiden speech the young member for Durham attacked the foreign policy of the Liverpool Government. 'We are called upon this night by His Majesty's Ministers to sanction a proceeding which I may confidently assume can find no parallel in the history of the civilised world. We are called upon as Englishmen, as lovers of liberty, and as admirers of

patriotism, to damp by the foulest means the rising energies of Norwegian liberty, and to trample underfoot the heroic efforts of a brave people to assert their own independence. Is it therefore extraordinary that there are some left in this country, who, remembering the glorious struggles of their ancestors for their liberties and their independence, should be anxious to rescue themselves from the imputation of being, even by their silence, accessories to measures which bear the stamp of tyranny and oppression? I, Sir, acknowledge that I view with horror a free people delivered up at the altar of diplomatic convenience. I confess I see, with sentiments of the deepest sympathy, their rights bartered away, and their feelings outraged by being consigned to the power of their most inveterate enemies. It does seem, indeed, as if every circumstance of this nefarious compact was destined to be particularly insulting to the feelings of the Norwegians.'

He went on to assert that the surrender of Norway by Denmark was not a free act, but a concession to force, made when the nation was surrounded by Europe in arms. He ridiculed the claims of Prince Bernadotte, and proceeded to say, 'Perhaps, Sir, I may be told, that Denmark deserved this treatment for her sturdy adherence to her alliance with Napoleon. Does not the event prove that her policy was right? Can anyone assert that she could ever have suffered such injury from Napoleon as she has suffered in the fraternal embrace of the Liberators of Europe?' He protested against His Majesty's Ministers embarking on a new and discreditable policy against a people, whose only crime consisted in wishing to choose their own constitution and government, and he denounced the blockade of the Norwegian ports as an infamous act.

'The future historian, Sir, will have to record in after ages a curious fact, namely, that in 1813,

England returned—in pursuance of a solemn ordinance—her heartfelt thanks, thanks for the blessing of a plentiful harvest, that she acknowledged the power and goodness of Providence in dispensing that blessing, and that in 1814 she dared to wield that power by her own inhuman, sacrilegious hands, and took the means of sustenance from the mouths of a free, brave, and unoffending people. Sir, I beg pardon for having thus trespassed on the time of the House, and shall only say that, if I have at all times rejoiced in the glorious establishment of Spanish independence, I feel that I am fully justified in praying that the flame of Norwegian patriotism may burn brighter from the mean attempts made to subdue it, and that such an unfortunate country may find as able, as valiant, and as successful an assertor of her rights as Spain has found in Wellington.'

This speech, though unavailing at the moment, led men on both sides of the House to recognise in the member for Durham a powerful speaker, who possessed to a remarkable degree, for one so young, the courage of his opinions. Not only in Parliament, but also amongst his friends and neighbours in the north of England, Lambton's ability began to make itself felt. It is perhaps only necessary in this connection to quote a couple of sentences from a long letter of one of his constituents, written immediately after the debate on Norway. 'You have already shown yourself to be an enlightened advocate of the rights and freedom of mankind. In your speech respecting Norway you have done honour to your constituents, your family and yourself, and you have afforded a very high gratification to those, who, reflecting on your father's virtues, looked forward with anxiety to the dawn of your public career.'

The speeches which he delivered in the autumn of that year show that his grasp of the questions of the

hour was not merely bold but firm. One of the most interesting of these addresses was a luminous survey of the course of events at home and abroad, made at a great meeting in Sunderland, in commemoration of the opening of the new Exchange. Even more significant, in the light of coming events, were the terms in which Lambton alluded to Earl Grey when called upon to propose that statesman's health at the Fox Banquet in Newcastle on September 19, 1814. The fortunes, both personal and political, of the two men were destined to be closely interwoven, and therefore this first allusion should be recorded. The speech opened with a graceful eulogy of Fox, and this passed rapidly into recognition of the services of Lord Grey, as a trusty lieutenant of that great leader. He declared that Grey merited the gratitude of every true friend of the nation, because he had 'disdained to hold the reins of government, when fettered by an unconstitutional pledge.' The reference was of course to the overtures which the Prince Regent had made to Lord Grey to form a Ministry. Lambton went on to say that Lord Grey refused power because he knew that its tenure under the proposed conditions would be 'embittered by the reflection that he was sanctioning the continuance of millions of his fellow-subjects in slavery, insult, and oppression.'

When peace was declared, prices fell, and the Government discharged a vast number of soldiers and sailors who had fought through the French war, and the labour market was overstocked by men who found their occupation gone after hostilities had ceased. When the question of supply came up for debate in the House of Commons, Lord Castlereagh declared that he 'felt assured that the people of England would not, from an ignorant impatience to be relieved from the pressure of taxation, put everything to hazard, when

everything might be accomplished by continued constancy and firmness.' It quickly became apparent that he had mistaken the temper of the nation. Pitt had imposed the Income, or as it was then called Property, Tax in 1798, but, in doing so he had appealed to the patriotism of the people, and had expressly stated that the burden should be removed when England had once more fought her way to peace. The tax had pressed heavily on the nation at a time when commerce was almost at a standstill, but it had been endured with quiet fortitude, because of the jeopardy of the country. Castlereagh's taunt about 'ignorant impatience' was unjust as well as impolitic, and presently there arose all through the land an agitation for the repeal of the Property Tax.

A county meeting was held at Durham, amongst other meetings at various places, in January 1815, for the purpose of petitioning Parliament against a tax which had been levied to meet the demands of war, at the moment when Napoleon was a prisoner at Elba, and the Congress of Vienna, on the conclusion of hostility, was engaged in settling the affairs of Europe. At this great gathering Lambton took a prominent part. In the course of a vigorous speech he pointed out that the public expenditure of the preceding year was within a few pounds of one hundred and fourteen millions, and that, in order to meet the prodigal necessities of war, nearly one hundred and seventeen millions had been levied. He denounced the Property Tax as arbitrary in its methods and oppressive in its effects. He went on to show that the tax was first made in 1798, and the people had been told that it was necessary, if English institutions were not to be undermined by the Republican principles of France. People were told that they must surrender a part of their property in order to safeguard the remainder. 'Now, gentlemen,

continued Lambton, 'did the people hesitate at that call? Did they demur for one moment? No, they acquiesced cheerfully, relying on the word of the Minister that the cause was extraordinary and likely to be of short duration. Their delusion was great and I fear their repentance has been bitter, for the war has lasted fifteen years. During that time the faith of Parliament has been repeatedly pledged to the people that the tax was to end with the war, and the words of the Act confirm that. Is this solemn pledge to be broken? Is the confidence of the people to be thus repaid with treachery and ingratitude, and are we, who are at this moment in a state of peace with all the world, to be taxed as when the united continents of Europe and America were arrayed in arms against us?'

He went on to show that an Income Tax of ten per cent. had pressed with almost ruinous severity on the middle classes. He asked how could the possessor of 500*l.* a year contribute 50*l.* annually to the Property Tax without finding himself scarcely able to provide for those of his own household? The people of England had submitted patiently to what was in truth the most oppressive of their innumerable taxes, but they had looked steadily forward to peace for the removal of the burden. He declared that the tax was a tax upon industry and enterprise, and added, 'if it is necessary to keep up excessive taxation—a necessity which I deny—let it fall upon those who can sustain the weight, and on luxurious consumption, but let not the poor and industrious be racked until they are deprived of their very sustenance.'

The result of the agitation was that, after a long series of heated debates, the Property Tax, which yielded a revenue of fifteen millions a year, was repealed on March 19, 1816, by a majority of thirty-seven votes, and for nearly the lifetime of a generation no attempt

was made to revive the impost. Wilberforce, in happy ignorance of the subsequent action of Sir Robert Peel, declared, in the exultation of the moment, that the wholesome principle had been established, by such a popular victory, that war and the Income Tax were wedded together.

Whilst the agitation was still in progress, Lambton, as soon as Parliament had assembled in February, moved for the production of the Genoa Papers. The Congress of Vienna, in its reconstruction of the map of Europe, had decreed the forcible annexation of the republic of Genoa to the Kingdom of Sardinia, and England, which had stormed the fort and captured the city in 1814, was left to carry out a decision which was rightly regarded as an act of national plunder. Lambton declared that the honour of the country had been compromised by this transaction. He charged his Majesty's Ministers with having degraded the nation in the eyes of the world, for they had abandoned the pledge which they had given to the Genoese. He protested against a whole community being delivered over like a drove of cattle to the King of Sardinia.

He scouted the idea that any plea about the Balance of Power—a term which was always brought forward to justify every act of violence—was a sufficient excuse for the spoliation of Genoa. Lord William Bentinck, less than twelve months previously, had told the people in a proclamation that their ancient government was restored, and added that he made that statement on the authority of the allies who had drawn up the Treaty of Paris, and yet now, before the Genoese had enjoyed eight months of their ancient privileges, a mandate had arrived from the Congress of Vienna, which annulled all that had been done in the interests of liberty, and delivered up the unfortunate country to the King of Sardinia. This transfer was also made by a British

Proclamation, signed by a British officer. General Dalrymple informed the people of Genoa that by command of the Prince Regent of England, the government of the country was now handed over to the King of Sardinia. Lambton accused the Ministry of cowardice in not explaining so infamous a measure. He declared that their silence was not more disgraceful to themselves than to the country which suffered such men to be at the head of affairs, and in order to see whether there remained a 'spark of ancient English spirit' in the breast of the House of Commons, he should press the question to a division. He was supported by Sir James Mackintosh, Francis Horner and others, but, as usual, the dead weight of the Liverpool Administration told heavily against him, and the motion was lost by a majority of forty-nine.

Sydney Smith used to say that the interval between the beginning of the century and the death of Lord Liverpool in 1828 was an 'awful period for those who had the misfortune to hold Liberal opinions.' He added that it was considered a piece of impertinence in England if a man of less than two or three thousand a year ventured in those days to express any opinion at all upon any important political question. If he had the courage of his convictions, he was certain to be 'assailed with all the Billingsgate of the French Revolution.' The gentlest epithets by which the party in power used to describe him were 'Jacobin leveller,' 'atheist' or 'regicide.' Political injustice and corruption everywhere prevailed, and the man who breathed a syllable against the senseless bigotry of the Georges, or hinted at the abominable tyranny and persecution exercised upon Catholic Ireland, was shunned 'as unfit for the relations of social life.'

It was at such a period that Lambton came prominently to the front, and, at the cost of much obloquy and even social ostracism, threw the influence which his

ability and wealth gave him on the side of the people. The working classes were suffering to a grievous extent from the intolerable burdens of a protracted war—the alarming cost of food, the stagnation of trade, and the dearth of employment which it brought in its train. The price at which wheat could be imported was raised in 1804, in consequence of the war, to sixty-six shillings per quarter, and, regardless of the privation in the country, the landed interest put forth all its power to obtain more stringent protection. The outcome was the despicable Corn Act of 1815, which was neither more nor less than a measure to raise the price of food. It absolutely prohibited the importation of wheat for home consumption, until the price in the home market reached eighty shillings per quarter.

Such a proposal excited popular indignation, and the attitude of the people was so menacing that it became necessary, whilst the Bill was under discussion, to protect the Houses of Parliament with soldiers. Lambton, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on March 3, 1815, proposed the second reading of the Bill, not only opposed the measure, but moved that it be read a second time that day six months. He deprecated the haste with which an Act of that kind was being pushed through Parliament, and added that he would never vote in support of a measure against which the wishes of the people had been so strongly, so widely, and so unequivocably expressed, as in the present instance. His amendment was duly seconded and supported, but was lost by a large majority.

Three days later, when the discussion was resumed, Lambton rose to order, and protested against the approaches of the House of Commons being occupied by soldiers, adding that, as he considered this most unconstitutional, he should move the immediate adjournment of the House. He protested against members

being menaced by a military force. Lord Castlereagh defended the placing of the military on guard as a necessary act of precaution, and remarked that the soldiers were required to protect members against the outrages of the mob. Lambton, in reply, said that he was not in the least convinced by the high tone assumed by the noble lord. He added that, on his way that day to the House, he had been nearly trampled under the hoofs of a squadron of Horse Guards, who charged the crowd down Parliament Street, and only halted at the principle entrance of the House of Commons. He thought that it behoved the House to guard its independence quite as much against a military force as against a mob. Indeed, in his judgment, that independence was the more likely to be endangered by the soldiers than by the crowd. A military force might be called in, first to protect their proceedings, and it might next be employed to overawe their independence. Eventually the motion was withdrawn, though not before Lambton had vindicated his motives in bringing the matter at once under the consideration of the House.

Whilst Lambton was making his mark in Parliament in the spring of 1815, his brother Hedworth—who had seized the opportunity furnished by the conclusion of the war to form his own impressions of the state of Europe—was travelling in Austria and Italy. He was in Vienna when the Congress was sitting, and in a letter dated January 11, 1815, he describes the aspect of the city, and amusingly lays stress on the fact that, although the diplomatists were in conclave, 'nothing in the social sense is in progress except one or two paltry subscription balls.' The carnival in Vienna he describes as 'nothing at all,' and adds, 'now the winter has fairly set in, most of the stragglers, like true birds of passage, have made for southern climes.'

He upbraids his brother for not writing, and adds, 'As you have not informed me for a long while of the state of your family, and all friends around my childish home, I am afraid of making enquiries for fear of blunders. If I enquire after the health of Miss Hudson, you will laugh and say, "He did not recollect she was married." It's like a language, which if you do not practise occasionally you totally forget. I hope to God they will not attempt to renew the Property Tax, as at so cheap a place as Florence I should be at least an inch taller with the produce of that diabolical impost. There is nothing known to a certainty with regard to the Congress; all is said to be in a fair train—the Polish business settled some time ago, and that of Saxony nearly arranged; of Naples they say nothing; nor do I think it has yet been brought on the *tapis*. The Swiss business is also nearly arranged, but that is not material. Poland is to be a separate kingdom, with a separate Constitution, having the Emperor Alexander as King, and, in all probability, his brother as Viceroy. These are the commonplace *on dits* of the day. It is very curious to see oneself surrounded by such great characters. The other night, at a small court subscription-ball—not in uniform, I was looking at the waltzing and felt myself bothered by being a little overcrowded. I glanced round and found myself between three of the Archdukes, the King of Prussia and Prince Leopold of Sicily. Young Lady Jersey sent me a letter to Prince Esterhazy, who was very civil and asked me to dinner. Love to Harriet and the children, of whose health you never let me hear.'

Alas, so far as the health of Mrs. Lambton was concerned, there was no good news to send. She had never been strong, and in the spring of 1815 her delicate state gradually deepened into illness, and in the early summer her condition was already critical. Waterloo was fought

in June, and Lambton's only sister, Frances, who had married Major Howard in 1811, had cause to remember the price at which that great victory was won, for her husband was amongst the gallant officers slain in that final struggle with Napoleon. Lambton scarcely had time to recover from that shock when he was called to endure, with such fortitude as he could summon, a still heavier blow. Mrs. Lambton died on July 11, 1815, just three weeks after the tidings that Major Howard had been killed at Waterloo darkened her husband's home. She was only four-and-twenty, but during the three and a half years of her married life her vivacity, and, still more, her winning gentleness, had made her beloved by all who knew her. Probably, timid girl-wife though she was, she foresaw, to some extent at least, the position which her husband would win; however, she copied, in her neat and graceful hand-writing, his speeches in Parliament and in the country into an attractive, gilt-edged volume. The last entry, it is pathetic to notice, was made in the spring of the year in which she died. There is abundant evidence, in letters which are still preserved, of the depth of devotion with which Mrs. Lambton had inspired her friends, and of the grief of her husband. At first he was almost reckless, and only the strong persuasion of his friends prevented him from a precipitate retirement from public life. Always a man of impulsive temperament and strong feelings, it needed the imperative sense of duty to drive him back to the responsibilities of his position.

There are letters in existence which show, not, indeed, the depth of his personal bitterness—for, like most proud natures, he suffered in silence—but the concern of his friends, and their fears, lest in the recklessness of sorrow, the opening promise of a brilliant career in the public service should be finally eclipsed. He was

himself of such a sympathetic and generous temperament that at no period in his life did he lack the kind of solace which is possible to intimate friendship, and some of the letters which were written to him at this period, though too lengthy to quote, reveal the warm attachment which he had inspired in his Eton school-days. One plea, which was urged with womanly tenderness and delicacy by one of his dead wife's closest friends, happily prevailed, and drew him back, after a few months of lonely foreign travel, to his desolate hearth at Lambton and his duties in the House of Commons. He was told to think of his three little motherless girls, and such an appeal was not lost upon him. He came back to his duty, and, though he looked at first with listless eyes on a disenchanted world, he was too young and too sanguine to remain captive to grief. He was beginning, moreover, to recognise how vast were the unredressed grievances of his countrymen, and how great was the need of fearless speech and bold action on the part of all who desired to take a responsible share in the coming struggle for political liberty.

Emerson used to say that there is nothing better for great sorrow than rapid travel, and Lambton had the wisdom to quit his desolate home in order to make a tour in Scotland. One of the letters which he received at this time was from his old school-fellow, Mr. T. H. Ripley, of Wootton Bassett, and is such an admirable example of blended common sense and right feeling as to merit quotation at some length:

'Wootton Bassett: September 12, 1815.

'My dear Lambton,—I hope you have felt benefit from travelling. . .New objects and scenery imperceptibly contribute to health, and health to feelings less severe. I wish indeed you had arrived at that state in which

you will think of the past with complacency, but you will acquire it, and sooner than you perhaps imagine. My father was a man of the strongest feelings, and I believe that the blow he suffered in early life, by the loss of my mother, was as great as a man ever felt; but the recollection, after the time of the first impressions was past, was more pleasing than painful, and so it is always with real affection. Generally, that man will show the greatest share of fortitude who can command himself sufficiently to let the world see as little as possible of the inward state of his heart, and endeavour to encounter all persons and all places with the same aspect as before. One thing has been invariably proved, that the longer the mind is unemployed through grief the more difficult it is to recover its tone, and, hence, men make strong exertions, not indeed to forget, but lest sorrow should absorb or weaken their minds.

'Believe me, the recollections of our early acquaintance and subsequent intimacy hindered me from being indifferent to your feelings, and this has led me into such a strain. There is much more sorrow in the world than appears superficially. There are mental and constitutional uneasiness, the existence of which the observer may neither conjecture nor understand; and I verily believe there are few to be found whose grievances, although they may be different, are not as great as our own. I suppose your plan is to travel, and to return to Parliament in November.

'Poetry, I conclude, has heightened the beauty of Scotland to all but Scottish eyes. I see by the papers a prize of 400*l.* has been adjudged to Sumner, the Master at Eton, for the second best essay upon the Evidence of God. The first of 1,200*l.* was given to a Doctor Brown of Marischal College, Aberdeen. The money for these prizes was bequeathed. You remember Lord Sunderland at Eton, and Thomas his tutor who

always talked to him in Latin—"Domine Sunderland quid non fecisti derivationes hodie?" and who used to put in his daybook, "Dom: Sund: male (or bene) exposuit Horatium hodie." He is said to be canvassing Oxford County, with every chance of success.

'I have been ranging over a manor of five thousand acres, and keeping the birds on the alert, without many fatal consequences, and am in expectation of becoming a magistrate, and hope to hold the scales of justice with a steadier hand than the trigger. I shall pass through town about the beginning of October, and return about the middle of November, and probably may meet you in London. I believe you and I are pretty well agreed about bishops. The interests of the Church will decline whilst they are courtiers and translatable. The ablest and most independent bishop of late years was Horsley, whose mind in many points resembled his patron, Lord Thurlow, almost as coarse and bearish, a clear and vigorous intellect and a close reasoner. Horsley's speeches in Parliament upon the Church and other subjects are good ones, and good specimens of their kind. Adieu, and, believe me, very sincerely yours,

'T. H. Ripley.'

Lambton was in Paris at the close of the year, and there he made the acquaintance of Lafayette, who at that time was regarded as a veritable champion of political freedom by those who had the courage to espouse the cause of the people. Lafayette was opposed to the restoration of Louis XVIII., and all the more because he was placed on the throne against the will of France. Lafayette had to endure, in consequence, the hostility of the Royalists, and took refuge in flight. There is a letter in existence, written from Paris on January 14, 1816, by Mr. Barrett, one of Lambton's early friends, which shows how narrowly the latter

escaped imprisonment as a suspect when Lafayette made good his retreat from an untenable position. 'I did not suppose it possible, my dear Lambton,' wrote Mr. Barrett, 'that any event could happen that could make one rejoice at your departure. This day has convinced me to the contrary, for I now rejoice in it with as much sincerity as I before regretted it. Had you been here you might have shared the same fate as Sir Robert Wilson, Hutchinson and Bruce, who were arrested yesterday and conveyed to prison. Wilson and Hutchinson are charged as accessories to the escape of Lafayette. Wilson procured passports for himself and Colonel Osyth, and, as Colonel Osyth in an English uniform, Lafayette escaped. Hutchinson, I understand, drove him the first stage. As for Bruce, I believe his imprisonment will be of very short duration, for I do not hear he aided the escape, but he remained in Paris contrary to the orders of the police. Of course, Lord Stewart must have been consulted prior to the French Government determining on so strong a measure. I hear that Wellington is angry—but not with the French police.'

A month later, Lambton, in his place in Parliament, in presenting a petition for the reduction of the Assess Taxes, and for new regulations respecting the collection of tithes, endeavoured to bring home to the Government the fact that the people of England would not much longer 'among their accumulated distresses, endure the pressure of taxation for the express purpose of supporting unprincipled tyrants upon their thrones, whether those tyrants were the Bourbons of Spain or the Bourbons of France.' The latter allusion, even if other evidence was lacking, shows that he sympathised at least with Lafayette in distrust of the new régime just established in France.

He manifested the same uncompromising spirit in

other directions. On February 19 he carried a motion of inquiry into the emoluments connected with public servants in the Colonies. He laid significant stress on the statement in the speech from the throne at the opening of Parliament relative to the need of economy in the public service, and he did not hesitate to add that Ministers, with the word economy on their lips, but with extravagance in their hearts, had placed a 'falsehood in the speech' of the Prince Regent. The Government, he declared, 'had put a speech of economy in his Royal Highness's mouth, which they afterwards deliberately falsified.' He therefore felt it his duty to move for a return of all offices, both civil and military, in the Colonies, under the influence of the Crown, in order that the peace establishment and the emoluments connected with the same should be investigated. This resolution was carried.

Lambton's activity in the House of Commons did not prevent his recognition of other but not less significant movements. Science and politics at the beginning of last century lay further apart than they do now. Sir Humphry Davy and Lambton had not met since the far-off days when they were together as assistant and pupil respectively under Dr. Beddoes' roof at Bristol. The year 1815 had been rendered memorable in the north of England by two terrible explosions of firedamp, at Newbottle and Sheriff Hill Collieries, in which many men and boys lost their lives, and an influential society was formed to investigate the causes of these disasters, and to suggest, if possible, a remedy. Davy at this time was at the height of his fame as a lecturer at the Royal Institution, and his services were enlisted. He went down to the district, and, after patient experiment, was able to announce that 'Explosive mixtures of mine damp will not pass through small apertures or tubes. If a lamp be made air-tight on the sides, and

furnished with apertures to admit the air, it will not communicate the flame to the atmosphere.' In January, 1816, Davy gave to the Royal Society an account of his invention, and was able to announce that his 'cylinder lamps' of wire gauze had already been put to the test in two of the most dangerous mines near Newcastle with most perfect success. The Safety Lamp was described at the time in the pages of the 'Edinburgh Review' as 'a present from philosophy to the arts, and the class of men furthest removed from the influence of science.' The Safety Lamp was indeed 'a present' from philosophy to the pitmen, for Davy, with characteristic generosity, refused to patent it, on the ground that 'his sole object was to serve the cause of humanity.'

It was at Lambton's collieries that the Davy Safety Lamp was first tested. There are some interesting letters in existence, written by Sir Humphry Davy at this period to Lambton, and in the earliest of them, dated September 9th, 1816, he describes his experiments, in connection with the lamp, at the Wallsend Collieries, and expresses his gratification that his last difficulty in regard to the invention had been surmounted by his old friend's mines. He adds, 'I thank you very much for the interest you have taken in the lamps, and my efforts in rendering them applicable to all cases. I consider the renewal of my acquaintance with you as a fortunate event, and I shall now witness with additional pleasure your effort in the cause of liberal and independent politics, and your attacks upon corruption. It is only by bold measures and decided attacks upon the profligate consumers of the public wealth that the country can be saved.'

Sir Humphry Davy's claim to the discovery of the principle of the safety lamp was promptly challenged by a sturdy son of the soil in the person of George

Stephenson then a brakesman working at Killingworth Colliery, but destined, before many years had elapsed, to win both fame and fortune by the invention of the locomotive. Into the merits of such a controversy this is hardly the place to enter, but the balance of evidence is unquestionably favourable to the claims of Sir Humphry Davy, though the Geordie lamp was made on much the same principle, as the outcome of a process of independent research. In a letter to Lambton dated from 21 Queen's Square, Bath, October 29, 1816, Sir Humphry Davy says: 'I never heard a word of George Stephenson and his lamps till six weeks after my principle of security had been published, and the general impression of the scientific man in London, which is confirmed by what I have heard at Newcastle, was that Stephenson had some loose idea floating in his mind, which he had unsuccessfully attempted to put into practice till after my labours were made known, when he made something like a safe lamp, but it is *not a safe lamp*, for the apertures below are four times too large, and those above twenty times too large. But even if Stephenson's plans had not been posterior to my principles, still there is no analogy between his glass exploding machine and my metallic tissue, permeable to light and air and impermeable to flame.'

In a subsequent letter Davy asserts that Stephenson 'never showed any experiments upon tubes till a fortnight after he must have heard of my results, and ten days after they were actually published by being communicated to the Royal Society.' He adds that he is a 'little angry with human nature,' and, in consequence, turns with relief to his recollections of a visit to Lambton Castle. The coal-owners of the north, in recognition of Sir Humphry Davy's free gift to the world of the safety lamp, presented him at a public banquet at Newcastle with a service of plate, and

Lambton took the chair on that occasion, and seized the opportunity to vindicate the philosopher's claims. In almost the closing letter of an interesting correspondence, Sir Humphry writes to Lambton stating that he is sending him a copy of 'Resolutions' signed by the 'first chemists and natural philosophers of the country, with the President of the Royal Society—the most illustrious scientific body in Europe—at their head' in support of his claims to the discovery of the safety lamp. He adds that it is 'disagreeable to be obliged to use artillery to destroy bats and owls,' but it had become necessary to take energetic measures. He enters at length into matters of controversy and then dismisses the subject with a graceful allusion to his friend's speech at the Newcastle banquet. 'But I quit a subject to which I have no desire to return, and shall only recollect that day when your eloquence touched my feelings, even more than it flattered my self-love.'

The controversy between Davy and Stephenson attracted at the time a great deal of notice, and even crops up in the most unexpected fashion in a letter of Sydney Smith to one of his many fair correspondents. 'We have had Sir Humphry Davy here. A spurious Aladdin has sprung up in Northumberland, and pretends that the magical lamp belongs to him. There is no end to human presumption and arrogance, though nobody has as yet pretended to be Lady Mary Bennett.'

Young statesmen and budding wits in those days used to amuse themselves by the stealthy manufacture of political squibs, most of which were let off in the staid columns of the newspapers. One of the earliest of Lambton's notebooks contains a number of these *jeux d'esprits* in prose and verse, written by himself, Tom Moore, Henry Brougham, and others; but, as Lord Bowen used to say, the 'finesse of wit, like a musical

laugh, is apt to vanish with the occasion,' and it certainly is difficult to recall their appositeness when the lapse of nearly a century has dulled the pungency of political allusion. Castlereagh and Canning seem to have been the chief targets at which audacious young wits in the Liberal camp hurled their missiles, and, amongst other effusions in Lambton's note-book is a poetical recipe for one of Lord Castlereagh's speeches, of which perhaps a few lines are here enough :—

> Two or three facts without any foundation,
> Two or three charges of party vexation,
> Two or three metaphors warring on sense,
> Two or three sentences ditto on tense,
> Two or three knocks, the table to hammer,
> Two or three rants, in defiance of grammar.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Two or three meanings, which nobody reaches,
> Would be certain to make one of Castlereagh's speeches.

Lambton's banter sometimes found expression in what he himself styles 'Philharmonics.' He announces, for instance, that 'the following grand selection of music is in preparation, to be taken principally from the Cabinet:—Lord Castlereagh will sing "The Plenipo" from "Mighty Kings" and "The Slaves Beneath"; Mr. Bragge Bathhurst "Goosey, Goosey, Gander" and "The Lullaby"; Mr. Vesey FitzGerald "Pray, Goody, please to moderate the rancour of your tongue"; Mr. Nicholas Vansittart "Pity the Sorrows of a Poor Old Man"; Mr. Goulbourn "Love in thine Eyes for ever Plays." Lord Castlereagh will sing in a duet with Mr. Canning "How happy could I be with either were t'other dear Charmer away"; and "Had I a Heart for Falsehood framed, I ne'er could injure Thee"; Lord Palmerston "What was it made the Assembly shine"; Mr. Peel "Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm a Beau," with a solo on the trumpet (his own); Mr. Croker "The Canadian Boat Song," with an appropriate dirge in chorus by Lords of the Admiralty. Mr. Canning will sing "Over the Hills and

Far Away," and at various intervals choruses of Country Gentlemen will sing "Corn Rigs are bonny, O!"'

Here is Lambton's account in 1816—the wish was father to the thought—of an imaginary change of administration. 'The Regent's Ministers have at length resigned. It was impossible for anyone who attended the debates in the House of Commons not to foresee the certainty of such an event. It was evident from the cool manner in which Lord Castlereagh's nonsense was received, and from the prominent part which Mr. Croker and his friends took in every debate, that the veteran professors were tottering, and that the "poetae minores" looked with great confidence to the ejectment of their masters. Another symptom of this was the modest, reserved, and diffident tone assumed by Mr. C. in the House. This extraordinary fact, coupled with the puffs which he exerted on himself in the *Courier*, left no doubt in our minds that he was the person pitched upon by the Regent to form an administration which would satisfy an economic public, and, from its unexceptionable respectability, unite all parties.' Then follows a list of the Cabinet, consisting of the small fry of the Tory Party under 'John Wilson Croker, Esq., created a peer by the titles of Viscount Jeremy and Earl Diddler.'

It is curious to find an allusion in one of Lambton's pasquinades, written as far back as the year 1816, to Gladstone's father, who was at that time, it is almost needless to say, a prominent figure in the House of Commons, as well as in mercantile circles in Lancashire. Lambton professes to give, with the aid of the oratorical arts of a descriptive reporter, a full, true, and particular account of an 'Alarming Riot at Liverpool.' Space forbids the quotation of more than a passage from what is, in truth, a circumstantial as well as an amusing description of men and manners at a moment when

political feeling ran high. 'Mr. Gladstone, of Liverpool, arrived in town late last night express, bearing despatches from President Canning, which announced to his Royal Highness's Government the existence of the most alarming spirit of insubordination in that devoted town. The public have been for some time apprised of the departure from Plymouth of the above-mentioned itinerant orator for the purpose of re-election. On the receipt of that intelligence at Liverpool, various symptoms were observed, indicative of a riotous disposition. In many places, conspicuously chalked up, were inflammatory sentences. "No Itinerant Orators!" "Walcheren and Castlereagh for ever!" and the like. In a short time these discontents broke out into open disturbance. The first person against whom the insurgent electors directed their attack was Mr. Gladstone. They surrounded his house about eleven at night, when he had just retired to bed, much fatigued by his exertions during the day on Mr. Canning's Committee. The infuriated mob dragged him from his bed, and, forming a circle in the street, placed him in the centre on his knees, and brutally forced him to swallow a copy of the departed Income Tax Act. It is impossible to say to what length the insurgents would have carried their amusements, had not, fortunately for Mr. Gladstone, a regiment of cavalry arrived to his assistance, and during the scuffle he escaped!' No wonder Lord Castlereagh told the Duke of Wellington that the session of 1816 was one of the most disagreeable political experiences through which he had ever passed. For, whilst the Government was assailed with ridicule, there was deep and menacing anger in the country, as well as, to borrow Castlereagh's own expression, 'Endless debates upon economy and a sour, discontented temper among our friends.'

The marriage of the Princess Charlotte, the only

child of the Prince Regent, and therefore heir presumptive to the throne, to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg took place on May 2, 1816, and came as a welcome interlude to the ever-increasing bitterness of party strife. The Princess was deservedly popular with the nation, which recognised in her the neglected child of an unhappy marriage. She had grown up in seclusion, and, without being beautiful, she possessed an attractive face and the charm of fine manners. Perhaps what delighted the nation most was the fact that she had a will of her own, and, young girl as she was, defied the Prince Regent when he wished to give her in marriage to the Prince of Orange, who was almost as dissipated as himself. Her marriage with Prince Leopold awakened popular enthusiasm, because it was known to be the outcome of a romantic attachment. It brought real but short-lived happiness, for the hopes of the nation were suddenly cut short by the death of the Princess in the autumn of the following year.

Meanwhile another marriage, which more immediately concerns this narrative, was in contemplation. Sydney Smith, writing to Francis Horner under date November 25, 1816, says, 'Since I saw you I have paid a visit to Lord Grey. I met there Lambton, the about to be son-in-law, a clever person.' A fortnight after this letter was written, John George Lambton was married at Howick—December 9, 1816—to Lady Louisa Elizabeth Grey, eldest daughter of Charles, second Earl, a union which not merely added greatly to his personal happiness, but drew him into close association with the leaders of the Whig party.

The following extract from a letter sent by Lambton to Earl Grey two days after the marriage shows the high esteem and affection cherished by the writer for his father-in-law. 'I must thank you very particularly for one part of your letter to Louisa, which she showed

me, in which you flatter me with the hope of my being as a son to you. I have never felt the blessing of a father's care or advice, and I fear have suffered much from it; it is therefore more gratifying to me than I can express to be able to look upon you in that sacred light—upon you whom I have always venerated as the first of men in public life, and, since I have been admitted into your society, as the most exemplary in private life.'

Lady Louisa, both as a girl at Howick and in her married life at Lambton Castle, took a keen interest, not merely in politics, but also in literature. Within the pages of two albums, which are in the possession of her descendants, are many scarce portraits and interesting autograph letters of celebrated people in the early decades of the nineteenth century. These letters, with the exception of a few from Goethe, Madame De Staël, Sir Walter Scott, Rossini and others, were addressed either to Lord Grey or Lambton. But perhaps the most remarkable document in the collection consists of some verses in the handwriting of Lord Byron, which have lurked in ambush in the Countess of Durham's album since the year 1822, when they were presented to her by the poet's most intimate friend, Sir John Cam Hobhouse. It appears that the poem has never been published, and it is now given to the world through the kind permission of Lady Dorchester. It is dated January 1812, the year in which the first two cantos of 'Childe Harold' were issued, with the result, as Byron put it, 'I awoke one morning and found myself famous.' Slight though it is, and in its opening words cynical, nothing could be more characteristic:

Again deceived! again betrayed!
In manhood as in youth,
The dupe of every smiling maid
That ever 'lied like Truth.'

Well, dearly was each lesson bought,
The present and the past—
What love some twenty times hath taught
We needs must learn at last.

In turn deceiving or deceived,
The wayward passion roves,
Beguiled by her we most believed,
Or leaving her who loves.

O thou! for whom my heart must bleed,
From whom this anguish springs,
Thy Love was genuine Love indeed,
And showed it in his wings.

His pinions, had he deigned to stay,
I only meant to borrow;
I wish thy Love remained to-day,
To fly with mine to-morrow.

The two closing lines originally ran thus:—

Oh, had thy love remained to-day,
My own had fled to-morrow.

Possibly the irony of such a confession prompted the revised version.

But to return to Lambton—at the close of 1816, with its dark political outlook, though detested by the Regent and his set for his plain and fearless speaking, he was rapidly coming to the front in the political life of the nation—more rapidly, in fact, than cautious Whigs of the leisured and punctilious type altogether relished.

CHAPTER V

ENGLAND IN TUMULT

The question with respect to them is not where they were, but which way they were going. Were their faces set in the right or in the wrong direction?—Macaulay.

1817–1820

Political outlook—Rick-burning and bread-riots—Cobbett and Orator Hunt—Castlereagh's refusal to consider Reform—Lambton's exposure of abuses—Scathing indictment of the Government—Grey's opinion of the young politician—Lambton urges Grey to take the Whig leadership—Grey's pessimism—Alien Bill—Lambton's relations with Brougham and Sir Robert Wilson—Attitude of Whigs towards Ultra-Radicals—Lambton in the new Parliament—His portrait by Phillips—Takes part in the Westminster election—'England in 1819'—Birth of Princess Victoria—Lambton on the Peterloo massacre—The Six Acts—Alarm of leading Whigs at Lambton's proposed Reform motion.

THE year 1817 opened brightly to Lambton with the fair beginnings of what proved to be settled domestic happiness. Young as he was, in the political sense, he was a man of mark, and at Westminster, as well as in the northern counties, his speeches were beginning to attract attention by their courage no less than by their ambition. He was already identified in the public mind with outspoken politicians like Tierney and Horner, Mackintosh and Romilly, and the allegiance of a young man of ancient family, great wealth, high character and conscious ability to the new Radical party, which was springing up in the land, was felt to be significant. The political outlook at that moment was not merely gloomy but ominous. The Peninsular War was over, and, though Waterloo had shattered the final pretensions of Napoleon in Europe, the peace which

followed found the people of England confronted with famine.

The nation was in the condition of a man who, after struggling with some deadly fever, has crept out of the contest, bankrupt of energy. England had done valiantly all through that epoch of storm and stress, and had stinted neither blood nor treasure in the struggle, but when hostilities were ended, she seemed for a time powerless to recover from the strain. The writings of men like William Cobbett and Samuel Bamford throw into relief, by their artless realistic pictures, the deeply seated misery of the people, as well as the political unrest which existed far and wide. Political indignation blazed as fiercely in remote village alehouses as in great assemblages of gaunt, despairing operatives in the manufacturing centres. Poverty was widespread, taxation excessive, labour cheap, work scarce, and wages were low. There were towns in which one out of every seven of the inhabitants was a pauper, and there were villages in which nearly every man was reduced to the verge of bankruptcy.

The English people have always shown—and never more splendidly than in the late South African war—that they can rise to a great occasion. Patriotic sentiment, so long as the war with Napoleon lasted, was in the ascendent, and nobody dreamed of embarrassing the Government with demands for the redress of political or social grievances. The temper of the nation changed, however, when the war ended. Year after year was allowed to pass without any serious attempt being made to remove from men's shoulders burdens too heavy to be borne. The peace failed to open new markets for English goods, and trade for the moment was paralyzed. The army and navy were no longer on a war footing, and one hundred and twenty thousand men—to take a moderate estimate — found themselves suddenly

disbanded, and, thrown in mid career upon the world, swelling the ranks of the unemployed.

It was a small matter in itself, but men who did not know where to turn for a meal for their children might be excused if they looked with sullen indignation at a grant of 60,000*l.* for the wedding outfit of the Princess Charlotte, and a proposal to saddle the country with an annual payment of a like amount for the expenses of her establishment. No wonder the masses failed to see the sweet reasonableness of the purchase, at such a crisis, of the Elgin marbles for the sum of 35,000*l.*, nor could they be expected to look with complacency on an additional grant of 200,000*l.*—making half a million in all—to the conquering hero of Waterloo. It was in grim allusion to the Elgin marbles that the joke ran round the town, 'When the people are in need of bread, the Government offers them a stone.' The harvest of the preceding year had been disastrous and the new Corn Laws sent the price of wheat up to 5*l.* a quarter. The shoe began to pinch even among the privileged classes, and that stout-hearted old Tory Lord Eldon exclaimed: 'I am ruined as a farmer—so much for peace and plenty.' Rick-burning, the plunder of shops, bread riots, and the destruction of machinery grew common, and the military had again and again to be called out to quell disturbances, which not only threatened, but broke the public peace.

Parliament was opened by the Prince Regent in person on January 28. He was assailed in the streets by 'tumultuous expressions of disapprobation,' to borrow the phrase of the moment, and stones were freely thrown at the royal coach. In his speech he expressed indignation at the spirit of sedition and violence which was abroad, and announced his intention to take every precaution to preserve the public peace, as well as to counteract the designs of the disaffected.

The nation was not left in any doubt as to what this meant, for the Government, of which Liverpool was the nominal head but Castlereagh the dominating spirit, promptly introduced a bill to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, and this expedient was passed by large majorities. The truth is, the Government was in a panic, for the Spa Fields Riots of the previous month, and the proposed attack upon the Tower, in search of arms, and upon the Bank of England, in search of the sinews of war, had convinced men, who were opposed to reasonable concessions, that force was the only remedy. The notorious 'Sidmouth Circular,' which gave magistrates power to apprehend persons accused of seditious libels, quickly followed, and brought with it a veritable reign of terror.

Even Cobbett, who had done more than almost any other man to harass the administration and to hasten the demand for Reform, not merely by his bold and uncompromising pen, but by originating political associations up and down the country, called Hampden Clubs —quailed for a moment before the storm. He stopped his 'Political Register' and sailed for a second time to America, only, however, to return like a stormy petrel in 1819. In the following year the trial of Queen Caroline lent fresh piquancy and force to his long struggle with political and social injustice. His words, though they sound startling and even extravagant now, were words of truth and soberness when Castlereagh was at the height of his power. 'I know too well what a trial by special jury is; yet that, or any sort of trial, I would have stayed to face. But against the absolute power of imprisonment, without even a hearing, for time unlimited in any jail in the kingdom, without the use of pen, ink or paper, and without communication with any soul but the keepers—against such a power it would be worse than madness to attempt to strive.' Cobbett's absence

was none the less a calamity, for the conduct of the movement passed into more violent and less scrupulous hands, with the result that the turgid rhetoric and menacing attitude of Orator Hunt and other demagogues did much to disgust and alienate the most rational and enlightened of the agitators, and the movement itself lost for a time its formidable character.

Castlereagh, meanwhile, was regarded as the incarnation of all the forces which fought against liberty and progress in that restless epoch. He had his good qualities, but he was bitter in speech and imperious in action, and he threw his political gifts and his masterful will, apparently without misgiving, on the side of authority. No English statesman of the nineteenth century was more cordially hated and, on the whole, with more reason. Shelley's passionate scorn broke forth in his superb poetical impeachment of Castlereagh and all his works. It lives in literature, though the strife which kindled it was long ago silenced. Castlereagh never ceased to be regarded with opprobrium by the people, and when, by the act of his own hand, he went to his grave in Westminster Abbey in the summer of 1822, the crowd in the streets so far forgot the instincts of humanity as to cheer the procession.

Lambton had a passage of arms with Castlereagh in the opening days of the session of 1817. It was over the question of Parliamentary Reform, which had been brought before the notice of the House by a petition in its favour, oddly enough, from the Corporation of London. He said that the time had come when it was no longer possible to delay an inquiry, not merely into questions of economy and retrenchment in the public service, but into all that concerned the Reform of Parliament. He hoped the House would not only correct the abuses which existed, but would go deeper and investigate the causes in a 'steady, temperate, and

dignified manner.' He took occasion to disclaim all sympathy with wild and foolish schemes of Reform, advocated by irresponsible people who seemed bent upon the destruction of social order, and urged the House to rescue the question from their hands. He pointed out that it was notorious that seats could be obtained by money, by social interest—in fact, by almost any means except that of the 'unbiassed and unbought' suffrages of the people. He wished the House of Commons to prove to the nation that it had other functions than merely to authorise the infliction of taxes. He desired that it should show that it still possessed, and was prepared to exert, the loftier power of enforcing the Constitution by stemming the corruptions of government, protecting the people, and restoring to them their just rights by reverting to principles consecrated by the English Revolution.

Castlereagh treated the proposal with contempt, and sneered at such petitions, asserting that they were manufactured in London, and signed by ignorant people in the country, who did not know what they were about. Brougham and Burdett supported Lambton in his protest, but they might just as well have whistled to the wind. A month later Brougham returned to the charge with a petition from Shoreditch, in favour of Parliamentary Reform, most widely signed. Lambton at once sprang to his feet and took for his text another petition, which had just been handed in from Bristol, and drove home its assertions that the debates of the House were a mockery, and only served to weary the public patience. 'Parliament,' he exclaimed, 'represented, in no constitutional or rational sense, the people, and taxation under such conditions was neither more nor less than slavery.'

Though only five-and-twenty, Lambton was already a man of mark, both in the Commons and in the

nation at large, by his fearless exposure of abuses, and an incident which happened a few weeks later went to convince the Liverpool Cabinet that, young as he was, he was not to be intimidated. Canning, who had refused the Foreign Office, had been sent to Lisbon as Ambassador-Extraordinary. On May 6, in Canning's presence, Lambton moved a resolution to the effect that the cost of this mission—it amounted to 18,880*l.*—was not merely excessive but an unjustifiable waste of public money. Canning, he declared, was sent to Lisbon with a salary of 14,000*l.* a year. Lisbon was a capital, where at the moment there was no court, and Portugal, moreover, was a nation to which no ambassador had been sent for well-nigh a century. He superseded a deserving servant of the public, acting in Portugal as Envoy with a salary of 5,000*l.* a year, and yet all he did was to deliver a single speech. He moved that in the opinion of the House the mission was uncalled for, and he denounced the 'culpable and profligate' extravagance of Ministers. A long and angry debate followed, in which Canning and Castlereagh took part on one side of the House, and Burdett and Tierney on the other, but on a division the motion was lost by a majority of 174. The debate was not lost on the country, however, as an object lesson in Tory finance.

Lambton believed with Fox that the end of all government is the happiness of the governed, and, therefore he threw in his lot with the people, and at a time when to manifest democratic sympathies meant to be shunned in fashionable society. To his honour, through good report and evil, he never wavered in his allegiance to those principles of justice and liberty which, though the common heritage now, were still below the horizon during the greater part of his public life.

Parliament met at the beginning of 1818 under the

shadow of national loss. The Princess Charlotte had died in the dark days before Christmas, an event which was followed by an outburst of grief amongst all classes of the community, so deep and universal as to be only comparable to that awakened in our own times by the passing hence, in the fulness of her service, no less than her days, of Queen Victoria. The Regent in early life had coquetted with the Whigs, but the knowledge that the great bulk of the nation was repelled by his conduct had made one, who possessed ability without principle, not only defiant of public opinion, but more and more autocratic. The Liverpool Administration, true to its previous traditions, lost no time in following up to its logical issue the work of coercion. The first reading of the Indemnity Bill was moved by the Attorney-General on March 9. Its object was to shield magistrates who had summarily arrested persons suspected of high treason, or had taken part in the suppression of political meetings.

The moment the Attorney-General sat down, Lambton got up and moved that the Bill be read 'this day six months.' He said that the Government deserved, not indemnity, but impeachment, because of the arbitrary imprisonments and disgraceful proceedings which had taken place under their auspices since the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in the previous year. The House of Commons was asked that night to throw an impenetrable veil over all the deeds of tyranny and oppression that had been committed under the Suspension Act. They were required, he said, to stifle the voice of just complaint, to disregard the petitions which had been presented, from all quarters, arraigning the conduct of Ministers, and demanding full and open investigation into the truth of charges, bound up with a matter which the House ought always to watch with jealous care—the liberty of the subject. He

denounced the despicable tactics which the Government had stooped to employ. They had themselves fomented sedition in order to create a panic, which gave them the opportunity of playing the tyrant on the broad scale, by crushing political agitations which they had not merely provoked but subsidised.

The courage of Lambton was nowhere more apparent in this speech than in the direct charge, which he threw into the face of the Government, of their employment of an unscrupulous mob orator, who afterwards became known as Oliver the Spy. 'This arch spy hurried along from county to county, proclaiming Physical Force as his watchword, displaying the standard of rebellion, and inciting the people to riot and insurrection. Why was Oliver not punished? Because those who sent him on his base mission were the Ministers of the Crown. In their councils originated the plan of sending spies amongst the people—from their Cabinet issued Oliver as their champion, yet these men now came down for an Act of Indemnity, requiring the House to screen the perpetrators of all those dark atrocities.' He closed his scathing indictment by appealing to the House of Commons to reject a measure, the object of which was to allow those who were guilty of disgraceful proceedings to escape with impunity. He might as well have appealed to a river to alter its course. The Attorney-General's motion was promptly carried by a majority of more than a hundred. Two days later the measure went into Committee, but not before Sir Samuel Romilly had sought to bring about its rejection on the point which Lambton had already raised, the system of employing political spies. This brought Canning to his feet, and presently there arose a sharp passage of arms between him and Lambton.

Lord Grey was the first to give expression to the opinion of the Whig leaders about the brilliant young

free lance, in whose oratorical triumph he naturally took, on other grounds, peculiar interest:

'Howick: March 15, 1818.

'My dear Lambton,—I was very much pleased with your speech and with the tone in which you took up this measure of the Indemnity, much the worst, I think, amongst all the bad measures that have occurred in my time. I felt before a good deal dissatisfied with the tameness of the debates on this subject, but your speech and those of Romilly and Brougham in the last debate, both of which I think admirable, have quite removed that feeling. I only regret that Canning's impertinence passed without a severe rebuke, and that you were not allowed to profit by the opportunity, which his personal allusion to you afforded, of answering him more fully. Called upon as you were to defend yourself, the House would have listened to you, but at so late an hour, Newport had no chance of overcoming their impatience to divide. Tierney ought to have spoken—it was quite a case for him to have exposed all the absurdity, and, I must say, considering the occasion, the indecent levity of Canning's speech. I hope Brougham will not be induced to think that he treated Lamb too harshly, or to make up for it by complimenting him on any future occasion. If I were to find any fault, it would be that he had not been severe enough, and I hope he will repeat the discipline on every favourable opportunity.

'GREY.'

Grey seemed inclined to hold aloof from directing the action of the Whig party, and Lambton, writing on March 26, urged the importance of his retaining supreme control, even though a nominal leader was appointed in the House of Commons. 'For myself,' he writes, 'I am ready to support any one whom you think best

adapted to the situation. But I trust you will not think of giving up your own superior control over the whole. There are many who only co-operate because they have confidence in you personally, and there is a very strong party who have serious objections to Tierney's wavering and indecisive system, in whose hands, were you to withdraw, the whole thing would be placed. I do not say that it is necessary for you to take any active part, but do not vacate the situation you now hold of being Fox's representative.

'You must excuse my impertinence in holding this sort of language to you, who are so much better able to decide what is proper; but I really am afraid that, if you were to announce your entire withdrawing from the direction of the Whigs, we should be split into five or six parties, all at war with one another, and not even united in opposition to the Government. And this is not an unlikely fear, I assure you, for I, *even* I—received an offer the other day to form a party from persons of rank and consequence, who declared they had perfect confidence in me, and none in Tierney. I only tell you this to show you that nothing keeps the party together but your holding the situation of leader. Even if you have not health or inclination to be so active as you have been, your being nominally so is sufficient.'

On July 21 Lambton reverted to the subject. 'With regard to Tierney individually, I own fairly I do not approve of him, and for reasons which I have stated to you over and over again. As I understand the matter, they (two or three prominent Whigs) want to appoint a manager or head in the House of Commons, you being the leader of the Whigs of England. For if I thought you had abdicated that supremacy, which now is certainly not a very troublesome one to you, but the exercise of which *nominally*

alone keeps us together, I should make a point, the first day of Parliament, of declaring my entire disconnection with the party, of which Tierney is to be the manager in the House of Commons.

'Now I consider Tierney to be unfit even for the secondary duties of that office; he is most timid and vacillating, and ever abandoning the great principles of our policy, or, at least, softening them down so as to be imperceptible, in order to gain the support of such wretches as the Grenvilles or Bankes, or some such genera of politicians. He is, besides, too much of a place-hunter for me. I know well that from the moment of his appointment all activity and energy will cease.'

Once more, on November 11, Lambton alluded to the matter. 'I return you Lord Holland's letter, which I was very glad to read, not only because it related to poor Romilly's family, but because it told you, what I have repeatedly told you was the case, that there are a great number of persons, and those the most eminent and respectable of our party, who will serve under no leader but yourself; for the sentiments that Lord Holland expresses are nearly the same, even in words, as those which I have heard from many others.

'You never seemed to give credence to my assertion on that score hitherto, but I trust this letter of Lord Holland's will remove all doubts. I do not know what he means when he says that Tierney "thinks of pressing you or others to some understanding of party arrangement in the House of Lords." Does he mean that Tierney wants Lansdowne to be declared the chief then? If he does, I, from that moment, retract my consent, however modified, that I may have given to acknowledge him as Manager in our House. If he begins his intriguing thus early, it is high time to dissolve the connection.'

Two months later, Lambton, having subscribed to a document appointing Tierney Leader in the House of Commons, thus reported to Lord Grey a friendly interview with Tierney, and the latter's views respecting Grey's retention of the supreme direction of the party: 'Tierney was very civil to me. I stayed a long time with him, and told him that I thought it but fair to own that I had hesitated in signing my name for various reasons, amongst others that I suspected him of too great a leaning to the Grenvilles, but that, now I had signed, in compliance with your wishes, I should do everything in my power to offer him support and assistance. He said he did not know before that I had hesitated, and that he should have done the same, and when he saw my name on the paper he was certain I would act cordially with him. . . . He thinks much depends on people knowing that you, now your health is better, will not shrink from the task of being leader, because no one knows to whom to apply for any arrangement, officially or otherwise, that may suit them in the event of a change of administration. . . . I think he is right, and I trust you will sacrifice your own feelings of future ease, and, when you come to town, take some opportunity of showing that you have not renounced the lead. Lord Holland's letter must have shown you that it is a necessary step. A mere calling together of the party in both Houses to deliberate on some question would do.'

Lord Grey at this time—a note to Lambton makes it plain—never dreamed that the Whigs in his lifetime would come into power. He even went so far as to think that his son-in-law, with youth on his side, was doomed to spend his whole political career in the cold shades of opposition. All the same he urged him to keep himself in touch with public affairs by everyday work—the only way to be useful and effective. He reminded him

that he might pluck success out of the evils of the time, since the worse things were, the better was the opportunity for a young member of Parliament of ability and courage to distinguish himself.

The strain on public men in the closing years of George III. taxed the powers of the strongest. Austerlitz sent Pitt to his grave, and both Fox and Canning died at an age when Gladstone had not formed his first Cabinet. Whitbread, who was one of the most fearless opponents of the war, perished by his own hand within a month of Waterloo; whilst Romilly, who had struggled gallantly for the abolition of the Slave Trade and the reform of the penal code, and had consistently championed the rights of the people, took his own life in 1818. George Ponsonby, who was nominally Whig Leader in the House of Commons, was seized, a short time before this, by a fatal attack of apoplexy in that assembly, whilst Francis Horner, just after he had risen from obscurity to a position of national importance, and when a great career was opening to him, was struck down by death at the age of eight-and-thirty. Grey himself at this time was in ill health, and the Whigs, baffled and disheartened, and alarmed moreover at the violence of the agitation out of doors, were beginning to beat that disastrous retreat which threw the cause of Parliamentary Reform into other and less capable hands. The truth is, the middle classes, afraid of the fierce agitation in the country, rallied to the cry of 'Law and Order,' and the Whigs, deserted for the moment by the shopkeepers, in turn drew back and lost the confidence of the people. It was at this early stage of his career that the line of cleavage between Lambton and Grey first began to reveal itself, for the former was impatient of delay in the presence of political abuses, whilst the latter moved slowly to his conclusions, and resented importunity.

Lord Castlereagh on May 18, 1818, moved the second reading of the Alien Bill, and Lambton at once proposed that the measure be rejected. He denied that there was anything in the condition of affairs to justify such a measure. He declared that it was brought forward out of compliment to Continental despots. The Alien Bill, he added, was first passed in 1793, on the ground that our interests were imperilled, because political refugees from other shores found their way to this country. The original bill was a war measure, and whatever could then be said for it was beside the point now, since we were at peace with the whole of Europe. He closed a vigorous speech by attacking Castlereagh's foreign policy in supporting the Bourbons in France, but the measure—the last oppressive enactment of a corrupt House of Commons—became law, and Parliament was almost immediately dissolved by the Regent without notice.

Lambton's own health, which even at this period of his life was never robust, gave cause for uneasiness in the gloomy summer which followed—almost the most inclement on record. He suffered from a determination of blood to the head. He was a bold rider and fond of hunting, but a violent gallop in his case always brought the penalty of excruciating headaches. He did not take, moreover, enough care of his health in other directions, and was inclined to kick at the hints which Lord Grey gave him in regard to 'high dishes' and less wine. All his life he was somewhat of an epicure, and, though experience at last taught him to be abstemious, he detested medical advice about diet. Henry Brougham and Sir Robert Wilson were in those days frequent visitors at Howick, and were for a term of years amongst the most intimate friends of Lord Grey. There they met Lambton frequently, and often broke the journey north or south at Chester-le-Street in response to his invitations.

Brougham's acquaintance with Lambton began when the latter entered Parliament in 1813, and during the years in which, as a rising barrister, he went the northern circuit he was often a guest at Lambton Castle. He was there during the short but unclouded period which followed the young politician's romantic marriage at Gretna Green, and he once assured his friend that it was Lambton's love of home and the beauty of the life he led there which 'first endeared you to me.' Brougham, with all his faults, possessed, especially in earlier age, great warmth of affection, and Lambton, who always wore his heart upon his sleeve, and was transparently honest and sometimes audaciously outspoken, shared his impulsive, though not his vindictive temperament.

Always keenly responsive to sympathy, Lambton never forgot, even when Brougham became his most implacable enemy, the tenderness the man showed him when he was stricken to the earth with grief over the death of his young wife in the year of Waterloo. No elder brother could have written a more beautiful letter that that which Brougham wrote, in the autumn of 1815, in answer to one which too plainly showed that Lambton had lost all composure of mind and was, as he himself put it, 'indifferent to everything.' He urged him to throw himself once more into public affairs as the surest refuge from grief:—'I believe that mental exertion and the forced effort to engage in old occupations are amongst the best means for the recovery of tranquillity of mind. You have advantages over most men in the possession of a strong and vigorous understanding, and a laudable ambition to employ it in the best way. You have youth and an exterior so agreeable, as to prepossess all who see you in your favour. You have gained a good name and the reputation of a zealous, honest public man. You have inherited from

your father the same sort of qualities which made him respected, and his friends see him again revived in his son. These considerations ought to determine your course, and, though the exertion may require an effort, yet as you love fame and prize the result of labour, which is tranquillity, I beseech you do not for a moment retire from that contest of public men and public affairs, in which you are formed to shine, and in which you are already so distinguished.' Brougham added a tribute to Lambton's zealous and unusual attention to business, and he ended by begging him not to hurry about in solitude from place to place, but to resist the *tædium vitæ* which not unnaturally had overtaken his sensitive spirit.

His relations with Lambton, though intimate at the outset, were afterwards broken by his own jealous perversity, and in the end—to a large extent in consequence of faults of temperament which overmastered his better qualities—he became the evil genius of a man whom he always professed to admire, but did his best to ruin. There was no hint, however, in the summer of 1818, or indeed until long afterwards, of any misunderstanding between the two men; on the contrary, Brougham's letters were most friendly—alive with political gossip about the General Election, which then took place, and full of concern about Lambton's indifferent health. He implores Lambton to take care of himself, and to give up hunting, which, to him at least, was a too exciting pastime. 'Romilly is gone, Sefton's case is precarious, and if anything befalls you, I may just as well go too; indeed, as it is, my vocation seems nearly at an end.' He was in truth but at the beginning of his career, for his popularity in the country may be said to date from his defence of Queen Caroline in the summer of 1820, when, with Denman, he shattered the base accusations which were brought against the character of the unhappy wife of George IV.

Meanwhile, unlike Lambton, who was returned at the top of the poll for the county of Durham, Brougham had a stiff battle to fight for his seat in Westmoreland. Contested elections, in those days, often lasted for weeks, and their progress was frequently marked by open riots. The cry of the Tories at the moment was that social order was imperilled, and that all the institutions of the country were, consequently, in danger. In one of Brougham's letters to Lambton a lively picture is drawn of the troops of horse which paraded round the inn at which he stayed during the contest, ready to take action on the least provocation. He was returned, however, and so was that gallant soldier, Sir Robert Wilson, who took his seat in the new Parliament as member for Southwark.

Wilson's fortunes, like those of Brougham, were destined to be determined by his attitude towards the indignities heaped upon Queen Caroline. Few stories are more discreditable than that of Wilson's dismissal from the army in 1821, after services of great distinction, simply because he had incurred the hostility of George IV. by his bold action on the day of the Queen's funeral. Lambton's relations with Wilson began shortly before the latter aided the escape of Lafayette in December 1815, and when the great calamity of Sir Robert's life was brought about by his chivalrous devotion to the memory of Caroline of Brunswick, he at once put himself out of court, so far as his attitude in this matter was concerned, by taking up his friend's just quarrel. Wilson's return for Southwark by a great majority, and the triumph of Romilly and Burdett at Westminster, were incidents in the General Election, which are described with all the enthusiasm of the moment in letters which still exist amongst Lambton's papers.

Unhappily, Sir Samuel Romilly, to the sorrow of all

who knew him, lost his wife almost immediately after his election, and his grief, which was uncontrollable, brought on an attack of brain fever, with the result, already mentioned, that he put an end to his life before Parliament met. Lord Grey described Romilly's suicide as heart-breaking, and declared that his loss to the party was quite irreparable. He told Lambton that a fatality seemed to have attended all his own public life. Even when events seemed at last taking a better turn, something wholly unforeseen was sure to occur, like Romilly's loss, to destroy the prospect. Nothing is more clear from Grey's letters at this period than that he seriously contemplated retirement, and but for the encouragement of Lord Holland, he probably would have withdrawn, in those last dark years of the Regency, from what appeared to be a useless struggle. His own words on November 16, 1818, are significant. They occur in a letter written to Lambton about the Westminster election. 'At present I am quite distracted by anxiety about Lady Grey, and every succeeding year impresses me more strongly with the conviction that to lead—for which I was perhaps never sufficiently qualified—I am now altogether unfit.' Like Brougham, Grey also, in spite of momentary dejection, had the great triumphs of his life still before him, and was destined—after fourteen more years of hard fighting—to lead the Liberal party to victory.

The throne in those days was in an evil case. George III., during the closing ten years of his reign, was blind, deaf, infirm, and often mad. The Prince Regent, though virtually king, led a reckless and despicable life; the nation knew that it had nothing to expect from such a ruler, and therefore regarded his approaching accession with apathy, tempered with resentment and scorn. Queen Charlotte died on November 19, 1817, and Sir Robert Wilson wrote to tell Lambton the

news. 'So the old Queen is dead at last,' wrote Lambton in reply; 'it must have been a blessing to herself, for she suffered terribly.' Then he went on to comment on the politics of the Government. 'General Gourgaud's arrest (under the Alien Act) is really too infamous; it makes me quite ashamed of my country to see such tyrannical acts committed under the sanction of Parliament, but *le jour viendra*. I see by to-day's paper they have started Hobhouse in the Burdett interest. What is the feeling with respect to him? Individually I like him very much, and I have a high opinion of his talents. I have such a headache and such a pen that I shall soon be illegible, so adieu.'

The General Election, wherever a contest was possible, was fought with great vigour, but in quite half the constituencies it was useless for the Whigs to challenge the issue, for neither justice nor argument availed against the pocket boroughs. Nevertheless, the result proved that the Opposition, in spite of all the obstacles which prevailed, had won thirty-three seats, but at the same time the one hundred and seventy-three members of which it was now composed were split into two camps. It had lost, however, in Ponsonby, Whitbread, Romilly, and Horner four of the keenest and most fearless critics whom Castlereagh ever encountered. It has been said that, from the day when the short-lived last Parliament of George III. met on January 14, 1819, the word Whig ceased to be regarded as synonymous with Liberal. That is, however, quite too sweeping a view of the new political situation which had arisen, for many who clung tenaciously not only to the term Whig, but to the traditions which it represented, were conscientious supporters of the cause of reform. Others of them, however, were repelled by the violent denunciations and reckless assertions of men like Sir Francis Burdett and Orator Hunt, men who threw the

movement back by the contempt and distrust which their tirades awakened.

Lord Grey, it is clear, drew back, with something of dismay and not a little of disdain, when violent harangues, addressed directly to the passions and prejudices of the people, grew common, and even Lambton, always more ardent and already more advanced, felt compelled to show that he had no sympathy with men who talked at random. Lord John Russell hit the situation exactly by declaring that there were at the moment two parties dividing the country, both greatly exasperated and both inclined to go to the folly of extremes. The Ultra-Radicals were making unlimited demands, which stern unbending Tories were meeting with peremptory and contemptuous denial. The Whigs attempted to take the middle course, but men like Lansdowne and Grenville pulled in one direction, and men like Lambton and Brougham in another; but nothing could justify the intemperate attacks on Grey by too zealous reformers, not burdened with the sense of responsibility, and who resorted to claptrap to curry favour with the masses.

The new Parliament met on January 14, 1819, but its first session was not remarkable, except for the deadlock which it revealed. Tierney's proposal for a committee to consider the state of the nation, which was practically a motion of want of confidence in the Government, was rejected by a sweeping majority. Burdett's motion for Parliamentary Reform met with a similar fate, and a measure in favour of Catholic relief was also thrown out. The petition of General Gourgaud—aide-de-camp to Napoleon—complaining of his arrest under the Alien Act on landing at Harwich, gave Lambton a fresh opportunity of denouncing the system of espionage which the Government had established. He also proposed a committee of the House to consider

T. Phillips R. A. pinx.

Walker & Cotton Sc.

John George Lambton, M.P.

at the age of twenty-seven

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a letter from Lambton to Lord
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election, which took place in
deep was the schism between
The occasion of it was
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J. Phillips R.A. pinx.

Wm. Ward sculp.

John George Lambton M.P.

at the age of twenty seven

the whole question of the Coal Duties in relation to the commercial interests of the nation, but this was also opposed by the Government and lost. Every forward movement had, in truth, his sympathy, and amongst his other appearances during the session was the bringing forward of a petition signed by Longmans, Murray, Rivingtons, and other leading publishers, stating the grievances under which the trade laboured, and asking that the Copyright Act might be amended. He also spoke against a proposal to put a prohibitive duty upon foreign wheat, a suggestion which he regarded as mischievous, and in the economical sense unsound.

In the midst of Parliamentary turmoil, Lambton sat to Thomas Phillips, R.A., for his portrait, a picture still at Howick, which is here reproduced. The subject is thus referred to in a letter from Lambton to Lord Grey on February 2, 1819: 'Louisa told me that you had expressed a wish for my picture. I have therefore undergone the torture of sitting to Phillips. Yesterday was my last sitting. He has asked my leave to exhibit it, but I demur until you have seen it, as does he, that you may suggest any alterations you think right. He has been told by artists that the picture does him credit, as a painter, independently of any likeness, and he is therefore interested in having your opinion and criticism in time to alter it before it goes. I fear if you set off as late as you mentioned it will be impossible. I had intended to surprise you with it, and therefore begged Louisa and Wilson not to mention it.'

The Westminster election, which took place in February, revealed how deep was the schism between the Whigs and the Radicals. The occasion of it was the vacancy caused by the lamented death of Romilly, and it resolved itself into a struggle for supremacy between the adherents of Lord Grey and those of Sir Francis Burdett. Hobhouse endorsed the abuse of

Lord Grey in the address which his committee had drawn up, and in consequence, another candidate, George Lamb, was brought forward by the Whigs, whilst a third went to the poll in the person of the venerable Major Cartwright, who had the support of men like Francis Place. The attack on Lord Grey was so violent that Lambton threw himself with ardour into the struggle. The contest lasted for more than a week, and in the course of it, on the testimony of Greville, Burdett made a shameful speech, but seems to have lost his popularity in a great measure, even with the blackguards of Westminster.

Lambton, in a letter to Lady Grey, describes how he was out day after day, advocating the claims of Lamb. 'I have been roused by the infamous attack on Lord Grey to take a very active part in the election, and I will carry it through. I feel sure my conduct, in warmly resenting such calumnies, is right. I have had no public opportunity of repelling the attack of Burdett, whom I give up for ever, but we shall have a public dinner, I hope, and then, to use a vulgar saying, I will wipe off old scores.' In the same letter—it was written February 23—he pays a warm tribute to the maiden speech of Sir James Scarlett, who afterwards became Lord Abinger, and forsook the Whig for the Tory camp. The subject was the debate on the Duke of York's allowance. 'Pray tell Lord Grey that Scarlett made one of the best speeches last night I ever heard. It made a great effect, and produced six rounds of cheering at the close. It was reckoned by Brougham the closest and keenest argument that he had ever heard advanced.' The result of the Westminster election—it was largely due to Lambton's spirited interposition—was that Hobhouse was defeated by a majority of more than six hundred votes. Lambton communicated the result to Lord Grey in the following letter:

'My dear Lord Grey,—The final dose is:—

Lamb	4465
Hobhouse . . .	3861

We have had a tremendous tour, but no one hurt. Our gentlemen horsemen, who were to ride in procession with Lamb, were extremely pelted in Covent Garden, but charged the mob five or six times gallantly. The chairing was abandoned—a riot is expected. I went with Lamb on to the hustings, and signed the return, but they did not maltreat us there. He got away through the church, into a private house looking into the churchyard, I into the street by way of the committee-room, and walked away unnoticed. Lamb is a prisoner still. Two hundred persons, at least, must be wounded on both sides; one, they say, is killed. All this is to be attributed to Burdett's violent language. I trust we shall not forget it.

'I will write you more particulars to-morrow. At present I can hardly find a quiet moment.

'Ever yours,

'J. G. L.'

Lord Grey wrote from Howick on March 6: 'I congratulate you most sincerely on this glorious and useful triumph, which I have no doubt is due in great measure to your personal exertions. It is most gratifying to me individually, and I can only repeat that it is impossible I ever should forget the affectionate zeal with which you have resented the insulting and injurious attack that was made upon me.' Burdett, as well as Scarlett, ultimately joined the Tories, and so became an object lesson of the folly of extremes.

George III., who had practically ceased to reign since 1811, was now not merely a pitiable wreck, but was plainly nearing the end of his days. The prospect

of the Prince Regent's accession excited neither hope nor fear, for the nation had taken the measure of a man who lives in history as one of the most unprincipled and selfish occupants of the throne. Shelley has described the situation in his lines on 'England in 1819':—

> An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king—
> Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
> Through public scorn—mud from a muddy spring—
> Rulers, who neither see nor feel nor know,
> But leech-like to their fainting country cling,
> Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow.

It seemed indeed just then as if the monarchy itself could not long survive the madness of one king and, still more evidently, the folly of another, but, at the darkest hour of all, a child was born in Kensington Palace, who was destined to raise the House of Hanover to a position which it had never before occupied, as well as to establish the throne in the hearts of the people by a long and illustrious reign, marked by the highest personal qualities, and adorned from first to last by unwearied devotion to the public service. The Duke of Kent called the child, who was born on May 24, 1819, Alexandrina in compliment to the Tzar of Russia. She was also to bear the name of Georgiana, but the Duke, who did not love the Regent over much, refused to give way when it was suggested that Alexandrina should be the child's second name. The Regent would not allow the name Georgiana to stand second to any other, and therefore the half-compliment to himself was dropped, and her mother's name, Victoria, was added. Lambton was for years one of the most intimate friends in England of Prince Leopold, afterwards King of the Belgians, and during the girlhood of Leopold's niece, the Princess Victoria, he was often summoned to Kensington Palace by the widowed Duchess of Kent, who attached great weight to his advice.

In the summer of 1819 the condition of England—in spite of the contempt with which Tierney's motion to consider it had been treated a month or two before—suddenly grew critical. Trade was depressed, and political feeling ran high, especially when the contemptuous rejection of Burdett's extravagant proposals for Parliamentary Reform seemed to close the door of hope to the lower orders. Many of the colliers were out of work, and the weavers in many places were starving, since all they could make was a few shillings a week, even though they toiled fourteen and sixteen hours a day. Even the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, was forced to admit, in so many words, that the situation in Lancashire and its immediate neighbourhood was 'very alarming.' It was said at the time that the Prince Regent was the only man in England who appeared to regard the outlook with indifference. The artisans began to combine, in the vague hope of bettering their position, and the unions which they formed were quickly turned to political account, especially after a session which was memorable for nothing except the imposition of new taxes to the amount of three millions. The great centres of population, notably Birmingham, Leeds, Newcastle, Manchester, were filled with angry discontent, and turbulent mass meetings were organised to protest against any further neglect of the just demand of the people for political representation.

Major Cartwright advised these great unrepresented communities to 'send a petition in the form of a living man' to the House of Commons, as petitions on parchment were treated like waste paper. Sir Charles Wolseley, a Staffordshire baronet, and a friend of Burdett's, was appointed at Birmingham to act in this capacity. Manchester determined also to send a representative, and on August 16 a great open-air meeting,

near St. Peter's Church, was called to give effect to this resolution. The operatives of Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, Middleton, Stockport, and Ashton-under-Lyne, and every village within marching distance, came, with music, banners, and caps of liberty, to the place of meeting, and Orator Hunt, about one o'clock, began to address a crowd of more than 50,000 people, amongst whom were many women and children.

The meeting was perfectly calm and orderly, but Hunt had not been speaking ten minutes when a regiment of cavalry appeared upon the scene. The county magistrates, who were watching the proceedings from the windows of an adjoining house, seem to have lost their heads because a black flag was held aloft by some of the crowd. They took hasty counsel, and ordered the arrest of Hunt, on the ground that the gathering was illegal. The crowd gathered all the more closely around their leader, who told the people to stand firm. The officer in command of the mounted yeomanry ordered the troops to draw their sabres and charge the crowd. A scene of wild tumult and bloodshed followed, of which perhaps the best description is given by Samuel Bamford, who was on the spot, in that realistic and dramatic book, 'Passages from the Life of a Radical.' The meeting was dispersed, Hunt was arrested, and men and women alike were put to the sword, or trampled under the feet of the horses. The Manchester Massacre, as it was called by some, the Battle of Peterloo by others, drew Radicals and Whigs together, as if by magic, in indignant protest.

The Prince Regent was cruising at the time in his yacht along the Hampshire coast, and nearly all the members of the Liverpool Cabinet were in different parts of Europe. The public excitement rose to fever height when, three days after Peterloo, the Prince Regent, whose yacht was then lying off Christchurch, desired

that his 'approbation and high commendation' of the conduct of the magistrates, officers and troops should be conveyed to the authorities of Manchester. Indignation meetings were held in the autumn up and down the country, and at some of them as many as twenty thousand people assembled, to condemn what all regarded as a daring violation of the British Constitution, as well as an unprovoked and cowardly act.

Earl Fitzwilliam, who at the time was Lord-Lieutenant of Yorkshire, and one of the leading Whigs in that great county, was abruptly dismissed from his post because he had signed a requisition for a county meeting at York to discuss the conduct of the Manchester authorities. Sydney Smith declared at the moment that he was not surprised at such an attempt to intimidate men in official places from the free expression of their convictions. 'It is a blow,' he exclaimed, 'aimed at the manly love of reasonable liberty; and the natural recompense which a profligate prince requires from those to whom he delegates his power. If I were a politician and found the people remiss in meeting on such occasions, I would be the first to rouse them.'

The condition of the country had now become so serious that Parliament was summoned to meet on November 23 to adopt restrictive measures. Lord Grey made it perfectly plain at this crisis that he had no sympathy whatever with the violent and irresponsible bluster of men like Hunt, Cartwright, and Place. He resented their attempts to force his hand, and they, in their turn, regarded the statesman, who in the end was destined to carry the first Reform Bill, as half-hearted. Grey did not relish the flaunting of banners, inscribed 'Annual Parliament' and 'Universal Suffrage,' 'Liberty or Death,' and other inflammatory mottoes, and it is

impossible not to admire the manner in which he bore himself amid a storm of conflicting voices. He had worked for the cause of the people long before many of the theatrical demagogues, who had pushed themselves to the front as mob orators, had ever been heard of, and, though he was not inclined to think so himself at the moment, he was to bear the brunt of the battle, when men who went up like a rocket had come down like a stick.

At the same time, his unpublished letters, of the autumn of 1819, show how keenly he felt in sympathy with the popular indignation over Peterloo. He declared that he had no confidence in the personal character of the men who were inciting the mob, and added that their object was not Reform but revolution. To the school of Radicalism, which they represented, he felt almost as great an antipathy as to the policy of the Government. He denounced their intemperate language and violent proposals, but declared in the same breath that when Parliament met he would do all in his power to obtain a searching inquiry into the proceedings of August 16. He knew perfectly well that, by taking a firm but temperate view of the situation, he was bringing down upon himself misrepresentation and abuse, but to his credit he never wavered.

Lambton, though more outspoken, took substantially the same view, and advised the extreme Radicals, who appealed to him from every quarter, to forego an impossible programme, and to cultivate a 'calm and peaceable demeanour.' A Radical association at York appealed to him for guidance on the subject of Reform at this juncture. He stated that his plan would be to suppress a great many unimportant boroughs, and give additional members to the counties, and to populous towns which were unrepresented. He added that he would extend the franchise in counties to freeholders, copyholders,

and leaseholders, and in towns to householders who were subject to direct taxation. He held, however, that in view of the meeting of Parliament, it was best that the people should be content for the moment to express their indignation at the outrages committed in Manchester, and their surprise that the Prince Regent should have sanctioned such an affair—on the advice of his Ministers—without waiting until due inquiry into all the circumstances had been made. 'I do not mean to dispute,' he wrote to one of his correspondents in the north, 'any of the facts advanced by you, such as the alarming state of the country, the depression of commerce and agriculture from the severe weight of taxation, the necessity that exists for practising the most rigid economy and retrenchment, or the glaring abuses which manifest themselves under the present system of representation. All these are too notorious to be denied, but I contend that by entertaining them at the present moment you would weaken the effect which an undivided and energetic appeal, with respect to the proceedings at Manchester, must inevitably produce.'

He made his voice heard at a meeting held, on October 21, in the city of Durham, convened by the High Sheriff of the county, in response to a requisition for the purpose of sending an address to the Throne, lamenting the horrible massacre at Manchester, and calling for a strict inquiry into the transaction. The meeting was crowded and enthusiastic. Lambton said that they would expect from him, as their representative in Parliament, a few words on that occasion. He declared that he never anticipated that it would be his misfortune to see the county of Durham assembled on such a melancholy occasion, to vindicate the principles, asserted by their ancestors in the Bill of Rights, of fully and freely declaiming their grievances by petition. The Manchester magistrates might have reasons for arresting

Hunt—of that he knew nothing—but there were no reasons which could justify the yeomanry in their acts on August 16. He was not inclined to go into the details of the affair; he only wished he could turn for ever from such a page of English history. But the legality of the meeting had been questioned. He drew attention to the fact that the magistrates, who had long notice of the proposed demonstration, allowed the people to assemble in their thousands, only to disperse them by armed force. No breach of the peace had been committed, no sign of riot was apparent. It was not 'until the swords of the yeomanry had drunk deeply of the blood of the people that any violence was offered in return.' This statement, he declared, did not rest on solitary witnesses or doubtful facts, but on general and unimpeachable testimonies. 'The warrant was issued against Hunt; still there was no breach of the peace. The Riot Act was read in a corner, and then, as if on that unhappy day every formality of the law was only brought forward to be mocked at, the cavalry charged before the time allowed in the Act elapsed.' He confessed that he was much alarmed at the approbation bestowed on the Manchester magistrates in the name of the Prince Regent, but they might rest assured that the Ministers alone were responsible for such a manifesto. Under such circumstances, it was the duty of the freeholders to come forward and vindicate their rights, for if they looked tamely on, the next attempt against the right of public meeting might be made at their own doors. The resolution was carried without a dissentient voice.

The Prince Regent opened the new session in person, and in the Speech from the Throne made pointed allusions to the 'seditious practices so long prevalent in the manufacturing districts of the country.' He declared that a spirit was now manifested which

was utterly hostile to the constitution of the kingdom, as well as subversive of the rights of property and public order. He added, 'I feel it to be my duty to press on your immediate attention the consideration of such measures as may be requisite for the suppression of a system which, if not effectually checked, must bring confusion and ruin on the nation.'

An extremely animated discussion took place in the House of Lords on the Address. Lord Grey moved an amendment in which, while deploring schemes dangerous to the public quiet, he asserted that it was the duty of Parliament to satisfy the people that their complaints would always receive just attention, and he therefore urged that 'a diligent and impartial inquiry' should be made into the whole circumstances at Manchester. Personally, he held that there was *primâ facie* evidence against the magistrates of conduct for which it would be most difficult to find any justification. He was prepared, however, to suspend his final judgment if such inquiry was set on foot, but the treatment of a man like Lord Fitzwilliam was likely to produce additional hostility to the Government, whilst the increase of financial burdens, by public extravagance and the additions to the army, were, in his view, the principal cause of existing popular discontent. The amendment—a similar one was proposed in the Commons and shared the same fate—was lost by an immense majority, but it was significant that in the Upper House the Prince Regent's brothers, the Dukes of Kent and Sussex, supported Lord Grey's protest.

The repressive measures foreshadowed in the Speech from the Throne were immediately afterwards introduced by Lord Castlereagh, when Lambton and Brougham, as well as Tierney, opposed the Six Acts, or, as the Radicals called them, the Gagging Acts, without avail. The ostensible object of these measures was to prevent

seditious meetings, and one proviso was that no gathering of more than fifty people could be held without six days' previous notice to a magistrate. The local authorities were armed with power to change both the time and the place of meeting. All adjournments were forbidden, and no banners or emblems were to be displayed. Even this did not exhaust the extraordinary powers which were committed by the Six Acts to the magistrates in this well-aimed blow—prompted by panic—against political associations for the redress of public grievances.

When these measures were under discussion, Lambton took the opportunity to protest against the statement which had gone abroad that there were some fifteen thousand men on the banks of the Tyne and Wear more or less armed, and ready for rebellion. He claimed to speak with authority, as a resident in the neighbourhood and as a large employer of labour, and he said deliberately that there was not a shadow of truth in the assertion. On the contrary, although the working classes of his neighbourhood were firmly and enthusiastically attached to the cause of Reform, he was persuaded that they cherished no hostility towards the existing Constitution. He had left all that was dear to him—his wife, his children, and his property—in the midst of these men, who were openly accused in Parliament of disloyalty and disaffection, but upon whose loyalty and attachment he rested with implicit confidence. He warned the House that more peril was likely to result from the coercive policy of the Government than from the turbulence of the calumniated working classes.

Before Parliament rose for the Christmas recess Lambton gave notice that he intended to bring the state of the representation before the attention of the House, and should move for the repeal of the Septennial Act,

and for the shorter duration of Parliaments. He should also propose the extension of franchise to all copyholders and householders paying direct taxes, as well as the destruction of what were generally called 'Rotten Boroughs.'

Lord Grey was by no means convinced of the wisdom of such proposals. His view of the political situation, and especially of the prospects of the Whig party at this juncture, is expressed in a letter to Lambton which bears date January 3, 1820. It shows how hopeless he was at the moment of the prospect of political redress. 'In a public view I think the preservation of the Whig party in Parliament of the utmost importance. It is really in practice the only defence for the liberties of the country. By that party the Revolution was effected, the Protestant succession maintained. . . . Its utility, I think, cannot be denied by any one who will calmly appreciate its efforts. How many unconstitutional measures have been checked, how many much mitigated in their character, by its exertions. Even the present session will furnish a striking proof of this in the alterations which the different Bills underwent in their progress through the two Houses. Besides all this, the having such a body united, in the event of any change in the public councils, is a chance which, however remote it may appear, ought not to be lightly abandoned.

'I must then deprecate the certain evil of the dissolution of such a body for any speculative or doubtful good, more especially when the attainment of that good is itself so problematical. You say a change of Ministers by means of the Whig party is hopeless. Is the accomplishment of a Reform of Parliament more certain? From all I hear, I believe that the public opinion in favour of that measure is greatly increased, but I have great doubts whether it is so increased, especially

amongst those whose influence will always be greatest on such questions, as to afford any reasonable hope of its being carried during my life or even during yours. The result of all this is, though I think it highly desirable to endeavour to raise the character of the House of Commons in the opinion of the public, by uniting the representative more closely with the constituent body, I would have that object pursued individually by those who are favourable to it, in such a manner as may neither divide the Whig party, nor pledge them to it in such a way as may make their acceptance of office—if so improbable an event as its being offered to them should occur—a reproach to them without it; when, though this measure might not be within their reach, it might still be in their power to render useful service to the public.

'This is shortly my creed upon the subject, which I submit to you as the result of more than thirty years' experience, and of my anxiety for yourself and for others, rather than of any interest of my own, for my views in this world, at least my public views, are nearly closed for ever.'

Other distinguished Whigs, such as Lord Fitzwilliam and Lord Holland, also viewed Lambton's proposed motion with some alarm. The latter expressed himself strongly on the subject at Lord Grey's house, and Lambton, writing to his father-in-law, thus alluded to the matter. 'His language respecting my motion, in your room in Hertford Street, was such that I never will forgive it. Doubtless all this will end in my complete separation from the party. I should not care for that were you not at the head of it. From any of the others I never received a particle of attention or consideration.'

Writing again to Lord Grey, on January 10, 1820, Lambton comments at some length on the lack of

sympathy and support on the part of Lord Fitzwilliam and Lord Holland, both of whom were so closely associated with Grey. 'You may recollect that I often have objected to the course of Lord Fitzwilliam's public life, as having been most detrimental to the public interests, from the weight which his support gave to the Government in times of alarm, and from his determined hostility to Reform. I often gave that opinion, not being then personally acquainted with him. Since then, through your means, I have been introduced into his society, and have become sensible of, what no man in his senses who knows him can deny, his most venerable, amiable and virtuous character. But that introduction and perception, although it made me constantly waive all reference to his political sentiments in favour of his private virtues, could not erase from my mind the feeling which I had conscientiously imbibed from a consideration of the effects produced in the country by his secession, and Mr. Burke's (from Fox, after the French Revolution). It was in this spirit alone that I made the observation which has offended you, at the same time admitting to the fullest degree his honour, his virtues, and his disinterestedness in the public service. The expressions used by Lord Holland, of which I certainly must retain a most unpleasant impression, were that my motion was "revolutionary," or that "if carried, it would be *as bad* as a revolution." I rather think the latter. These words at the time struck me as rather strong, considering that his uncle had supported nearly a similar motion when made by yourself (I think in 1793), and that, even if I had no such authorities, I might fairly be entitled to such charitable considerations as would free me from the imputation of being foolish enough not to discover the dangerous tendency of the motion before I publicly entertained it. When, however, in addition to that, almost every hour and every

friend told me of the excommunicating doctrines held at Holland House respecting myself, and that even you thought it necessary to expostulate with Lady Holland —when all these things were presented to my mind, I confess the impression was that I was compelled to do what you deprecate, namely, "take it personally to myself."

'Certainly there is no one who more keenly feels a slight than myself, and, if I feel it, I cannot assume a sense of content or cordiality. I acknowledge the defect, and feel that, while I would strain every nerve and make every sacrifice for those who are kind to me, I cannot conceal my want of esteem and cordiality towards those who, as in the above instance, endeavour to run me down for the particular purpose of their own, or to advance the interest of their particular friends.

'If my own consequence and interests are to be advanced only by the hypocrisy of smiling on those whom I inwardly despise or detest, then I would infinitely rather remain as insignificant as I am at present. I am greatly obliged to those to whom you allude as anxious for my welfare, but I never can repay their good wishes by a compliance so foreign to my feelings and my conscience. I beg you will not think of making any sort of apology for stating your sentiments on any part of my conduct that seems to you objectionable. Any "delicacy" on that score will never be acceptable to me. Deserted as I have been through life, left entirely to my own guidance and resources, such as they were, having no one to fall back upon in any emergency for advice or instruction, and sensible as I am of my own deficiencies, both in nature and education, I should indeed be insane if I repelled the advice of one to whom I look up with such deference. At the same time I trust I may hope that, with the same freedom that I beg

you to condemn, you will also, when I give you the opportunity, approve.'

In spite of the gloomy forebodings in Lord Grey's letter of January 3, and of Lambton's despondency through the lack of enthusiasm in the cause of Reform on the part of Grey and his intimate friends, it was the master of Howick who in 1832 carried the first Reform Bill, and, though nearly thirty years his senior, outlived Lambton by five years.

In the midst of the flutter in Whig circles, caused by the notice of Lambton's drastic motion, George III. died on January 29, 1820, and a new reign began, bringing new problems to the front.

CHAPTER VI

QUEEN CAROLINE AND THE RADICALS

If wrong there be, let it lie at his door who wickedly thrust her from it.—Thackeray.

1820–1824

Accession of George IV.—Popular enthusiasm for Queen Caroline—Cost of the Durham election—Albany Fonblanque on Lambton's speeches—Lambton's opposition to the Alien Act—His support of Queen Caroline—His Radical views on Reform—Apathy and vacillation of the Whigs—Lambton's first great speech on Reform—Prosecution of Radical Reformers—The Queen's funeral procession—Lambton's defence of Sir Robert Wilson—His friendship with the Duke of Sussex—Supports the British Contingent in Spain—On the treatment of Silk Buckingham—Haydon and the national encouragement of Art.

THE accession of the Prince Regent as George IV. made no real difference to the political situation. Lord Liverpool was still in power, and remained at the head of affairs for seven more years of disaffection and turbulence, when, after a tenure of office which forms one of the most discreditable epochs in modern history, his Ministry gave place to the brief-lived but memorable administration of Canning.

The old King had not been dead a month before the nation was startled by the Cato Street Conspiracy—a bold plot, the object of which was the assassination of Lord Castlereagh and the rest of the Ministers. The chief mover in this wild scheme was Arthur Thistlewood, who had once been a subaltern officer, and the gang had arranged to murder the Ministers when assembled at a Cabinet dinner at Lord Harrowby's house in Grosvenor Square on the night of February 23. They proposed to

fire a rocket as soon as the deed was done, and this was to be the signal for the mob to attack the Bank and the Mansion House, to set fire to London in several places, and to proclaim a provisional government. One of Thistlewood's accomplices turned informer. The Ministers met at Fife House, and the police succeeded in surprising the conspirators as they were arming themselves in Cato Street. Thistlewood and some of his accomplices were captured after a struggle, and he and four others were executed, whilst five more of the desperadoes were transported for life. It was a mad, as well as a wicked scheme, but it shows the temper of the times that such men should have been regarded by no inconsiderable section of the populace as heroes and martyrs.

George IV. was lying ill at the time, so ill in fact that his life was in danger; but that did not prevent him from quarrelling with the Ministry. He stubbornly declared that Queen Caroline's name should not appear in his Liturgy. She had been abroad since the summer of 1814, and had been living apart from him since 1796, the year of the birth of the Princess Charlotte. He had repudiated his wife, because, rightly or wrongly, he cherished a strong feeling of aversion towards her; but now, though notoriously immoral himself, he was engaged in raking up a charge of misconduct against her. A few days before the Cato Street Conspiracy Lord Liverpool threatened to resign, because of the King's attitude towards his Consort, but, after a scene, the difficulty was patched up for the moment. The Queen, finding herself insulted at Rome, determined to come to England to vindicate her rights, and was received, to the annoyance of the Court, with enthusiasm in London, only, however, to find herself confronted by the famous Bill of Pains and Penalties, which was brought before Parliament by Lord Liverpool in July.

Her trial took place in the House of Lords, lasted several months, and was memorable for Brougham's oratorical triumph in her defence. '"God bless Queen Caroline" is chalked all over the walls of the town,' wrote Sir Robert Wilson to Lambton, in a letter which throws a vivid side-light on popular feeling. The storm of popular indignation was so menacing that, in the end, the Bill was abandoned, amidst general rejoicings, and on November 29 the Queen went in state to St. Paul's to return thanks for her deliverance from 'great peril and affliction.'

Meanwhile, a General Election had taken place, and Lambton (March 13, 1820), after a stiff contest of six days, was returned for his old seat at the head of the poll, beating the other successful candidate, the Hon. W. Vane Powlett, by nearly six hundred votes. The victory, in a financial sense, was dearly won, for the election cost Lambton no less than 30,000*l.*, a fact which he mentioned in the House of Lords in 1832 when advocating Reform. He had ardently espoused the cause of the injured Queen, and no one at that crisis had uttered more scathing words of indignant contempt. He declared that it was a mockery to call the proceedings against Queen Caroline a trial, as the whole affair was of a cruel and illegal nature, and expressed the hope that the people would continue to press for a change in the representation, without which no progress in the country was possible. On the eve of the contest in Durham, he received the following note from a local magnate, Sir T. H. Liddell, afterwards Lord Ravensworth:

'Brighton: February 24, 1820.

'Dear Lambton,—These are not times to suffer private feelings to interfere with what I consider a public duty; and I will frankly tell you that your conduct both in Parliament and in the county of Durham

has appeared to me so dangerous, and likely to do such incalculable mischief that, even if you were my own brother, I should oppose you by all the means in my power. I cannot conclude without assuring you that it is with extreme regret that I return you this answer.

'I am, &c.

'THOMAS H. LIDDELL.'

There was no rapid delivery of letters in those days, but as quickly as possible came the characteristic reply—a fine example of the retort courteous.

'Lambton Hall: March 3, 1820.

'Dear Sir Thomas,—In answer to yours I beg to say that I feel gratitude for your frankness, compassion for your fears, little dread of your opposition, and no want of your support.

'I am, &c.

'J. G. LAMBTON.'

He had indeed no need of such support, for, though less than four thousand electors were entitled to vote, he had a majority of nearly six hundred at the poll, and his return was hailed by the great mass of the people, who had no voice in the struggle, with boundless enthusiasm. A snatch from a ballad, which was published in Durham on his return, and was sung by the crowd, bears witness to the popular feeling and the place which the Lambtons had won for themselves amongst their own people:

Ere Great Edward with lilies emblazon'd his shield,
Ere the feathers were won by proud Wales,
Ere the battle was struck on Hastings' fell field,
Or our cliffs saw the Normans' white sails,

Independent and free, for bright honour renown'd,
The Lambtons still dwelt on the Wear;
And the name that to-day by our efforts is crown'd
Our ancestors valued as dear.

Albany Fonblanque heard Lambton's speeches day after day from the Durham hustings during that long-contested election, and declared that he had never listened to political addresses to immense multitudes which were so entirely free from reproach in the matter of taste. Lambton, he added, was no rhetorician, but he spoke what he believed to be true, and what his audience believed to be true, with manliness, simplicity, and earnestness—the qualities which make the best part of eloquence.

It was still, as Sydney Smith once put it, an awful period for those who ventured to maintain Liberal opinions, for in 1820 there was 'no more chance of a Whig Administration than of a thaw in Zembla.' The harsh policy of repression was not relaxed when the new Parliament met in the spring of 1820, and small wonder if the people, in their despair, grew more and more turbulent, and had recourse to ill-advised and even mischievous expedients.

Lambton, who had suffered a severe illness at the beginning of the year, was in his place when Parliament met on April 27, and on the following day rose to renew the notice which he had given in the previous session of his intention to bring before the House the corrupt state of the representation, and stated that he should submit a motion on the subject on June 6. He felt that the Government under the Liverpool Administration was making rapid strides towards despotism, and he did not conceal his opinion that, if Englishmen still possessed any liberties, they held them, so to speak, on sufferance. A fortnight later he supported, in an energetic speech, a petition from the merchants and tradesmen of Newcastle-on-Tyne, for the shortening of Parliaments, and the transfer of the suffrage from notoriously corrupt and decayed boroughs to populous towns. He warned the Government that

the prevailing dissatisfaction in the country must inevitably increase, unless measures were adopted for the redress of grievances, which were not imaginary, but real.

Lord Castlereagh, on June 1, again moved for leave to bring in a Bill to continue the provisions of the Alien Act, with all the harsh clauses of the original measure, and Lambton opposed it as before, but, as he expected, without avail, for its renewal was granted by a majority of eighty-six. He held that the Alien Act was a departure from the principles of the constitution, and was beneath the dignity of the country. He told Lord Castlereagh to his face that even despotic James II. had never descended to such a measure, and hinted that it ill became an English statesman to truckle in this way to foreign autocrats. His motion on Reform was shelved in the beginning of June by the adjournment of the House, in consequence of the sudden arrival in England of Queen Caroline, who had come to face the charges brought against her.

The Queen's dramatic return to England roused the enthusiasm of the majority of the nation to fever point, and her trial, which at once began, so engrossed Parliament and the people that Lambton in the end reluctantly withheld his proposals on Reform until the next session, in order to throw himself heart and soul into the defence of an injured, though injudicious, woman. He tried to induce Lord Grey to take part in the agitation, but the Earl thought that so delicate a matter, and one which concerned so intimately the Royal Family, ought not to be taken up as a party question, and therefore, as far as possible, he held aloof from the angry discussions which arose. There is no need here to recount the dramatic incidents which marked the Queen's trial, the result of which has been stated on a previous page. Sir Robert Wilson wrote

almost daily to Lambton during that crisis, and his letters—they are too long to quote—give a realistic account of Brougham's magnificent defence, the apathy of the soldiers who were garrisoned in force in the capital, and the indignation of the populace. Straws show how the current ran. At a review of the troops in London, the cry which rose above all others was 'God save the Queen,' and at a public banquet, 'God damn the King' was the toast which held the place of honour.

All through the autumn nothing else was heard of except the Queen's trial, and, as Lambton put it, not nine-tenths but nineteen-twentieths of the people were by this time in avowed and open hostility to the proceedings. The people stood ready in the Park for the Queen's appearances, in order to take her horses from the carriage and draw her in triumph, and the blaze of illuminations, when the persecution collapsed, rivalled the popular rejoicings on the news of Waterloo. Sidmouth and Castlereagh walked arm in arm down Parliament Street, trying to keep a cheerful courage up, amid the groans and hisses of the people. 'Here we go,' exclaimed Sidmouth, in a confidential whisper, 'the two most popular men in England.' 'Yes,' replied Castlereagh, with characteristic cynicism, 'through a grateful and admiring multitude.' The Duke of Portland, talking to Wellington when the matter was still undecided, urged that the Bill of Pains and Penalties ought not to pass the House of Lords, since disgrace would fall upon the King, because of the recriminations that would assuredly find utterance in the House of Commons. Wellington's reply was significant, 'The King is degraded as low as he can be already.'

The Queen's trial by the House of Lords detained those hereditary legislators in town, vastly to their own discontent, until the autumn. Lambton hit off the situation in an epigram which amused his friends:

In the business which brings all their lordships to town
They will all be knocked up if they are not knocked down,
And no good can result from the Acts of the House
But to peers' eldest sons, law advisers and—grouse.

During the recess addresses of congratulation poured in from all parts of the kingdom to Queen Caroline, and under their cover the Radicals took occasion to state some plain truths. Lambton drew up one, which was widely signed, from the inhabitants of Chester-le-Street, in the county of Durham, running as follows: 'To the Queen's most Excellent Majesty. We humbly beg leave to offer our congratulations to your Majesty on the signal defeat experienced by your relentless persecutors in their attempts to defame and degrade your Majesty by means the most base and unconstitutional. We are of opinion that the whole proceedings against your Majesty, from the period when you were treacherously persuaded to leave this country until that memorable hour when the First Minister of the Crown withdrew his own accusation against your Majesty, have been marked by the most glaring injustice and oppression, and that the treatment which your Majesty has received since they abandoned their charges is such as could only have been justified by their complete and acknowledged success, and is at variance with the known principles of British justice. The recent prorogation of the First Parliament holden in the present reign, without speech or message from the Throne, and in such a manner as to preclude your Majesty from the opportunity of communicating your sentiments on your own unexampled situation, appears to us to be unconstitutional, invidious, and cruel. We cannot conclude without expressing to your Majesty our conviction that the abandonment of the late Bill of Pains and Penalties is a tardy, but complete admission of the unfitness of the tribunal selected by your Majesty's accusers themselves, and warrants a belief

that they dreaded the exposure which must have followed a more impartial investigation of the truth by the House of Commons.'

When Parliament met in January 1821, Lambton, in presenting a petition from Stockton against the indignity which the Queen was called to endure—the exclusion of her name from the Liturgy—ridiculed Castlereagh's attempt to persuade himself that he and his colleagues possessed the confidence of the nation. Again and again he returned to the charge in presenting other petitions, and in one instance asserted that the petition which he held in his hand had been signed by every person in the town, except the postmaster and 'one or two people who lived upon the taxes.'

On February 5, Lord Tavistock rose to move a formal resolution, denouncing the conduct of the Ministers. Lambton seconded it. In a masterly speech he reviewed the whole course of the proceedings, and declared that the conduct of the Government was at once inconsistent and senseless. 'Nothing could be more false than the plea that the Bill (of Pains and Penalties) was called for to uphold the morals of the country. So far from its having had any such effect, the proceedings under that Bill had done more to relax the strict system of morals, which had happily so long pervaded this country, and to alienate from the people the affection which they were wont to bear to Royalty, than any other measure which had occurred in modern times.' The Queen, he added, had been made the object of unmanly taunts, and if she had adopted the recrimination to which she might well have resorted, the country might have been involved in all the horrors of revolution. He ridiculed the bribe of 50,000*l.* a year which it was now proposed should be given to her Majesty, provided she dropped the title of Queen and went abroad. He called upon the Government to recognise

that there was no alternative between the verdict of guilty and her Majesty's admission into the full enjoyment and exercise of her rights and privileges as Queen Consort, and he charged those in authority to admit Queen Caroline to the rank which she claimed by right, now that the Bill against her had entirely failed. His speech called forth loud cheers from both sides of the House, and a two nights' debate followed, the division being taken at half-past six in the morning. The motion was lost by a majority of one hundred and forty-six, but Lambton failed in good company, for Althorp, Duncannon, Brougham, Ellice, Hobhouse, Mackintosh, Wilson, Graham, Tierney, and Whitbread were in the minority.

The Fox Anniversary dinner at Edinburgh quickly followed, and was more largely attended than it had been for years. Lambton was one of the chief speakers, and he took occasion to describe the condition of the country. He said that the man whom they were met to honour advocated principles the reverse of those which had inspired Pitt. The policy of the latter had prevailed for a period of nearly forty years, with the result that the National Debt had been raised to nearly eight hundred millions, the poor rate to eight millions a year, and, side by side with this, the character of the people had been degraded, and commerce and agriculture had been overwhelmed. The present Ministry had no sympathy with the people. They had shown it by their approval of the conduct of the Manchester magistrates at Peterloo, as well as by their jealousy of the Press. 'Men who would take office now must prepare for a total change of policy, both foreign and domestic. They must not interfere in the government of foreign states without pressing or justifiable necessity. They must repeal the Acts lately passed, must relieve those imprisoned for political offences, must remove disability

from holding office, founded on religious opinions. They must reduce the Army—they must enforce a rigorous order of retrenchment in the higher, as well as in the lower departments of the public service, and lastly, but more especially, they must not delay to grant a reform in the representation of the people of England. Without these concessions nothing could restore tranquillity.'

Lambton was far in advance of his times. The Whigs of that generation did not share his desire for such sweeping reforms. They did not believe in Brougham's assertion that even uproar might be wholesome in the existing political situation. They were convinced that Parliamentary Reform had not yet come within the range of practical politics; they were by no means of one mind concerning it, and the tumult in the country made them distrustful of the people, in whose good sense and loyalty they had not yet learnt to put confidence. They were timid, and therefore weak, and were open to the charge of doing more to resist the wild and intemperate demands of irresponsible agitators, and to take the wind out of the sails of such men, than by formulating for themselves a consistent and progressive policy. They allowed themselves, in consequence, to be thrust aside through their apathy and vacillation, by rhetorical demagogues, who at least knew their own mind, and were not afraid to express it, and the result was disastrous.

It must not be forgotten that in the Whig party, as then constituted, there were many men who possessed pocket boroughs and great territorial and social ascendency, and these, for the most part, were slow to commit themselves to schemes which, they said, would make havoc of their own influence. They admitted the need of administrative changes; they were jealous of the liberty of the subject and the freedom of the Press;

many of them were advocates of fiscal reform, and not a few were quite alive to the necessity, as well as the justice, of dealing with religious disabilities. But the Terror in France was not forgotten; society spoke of extreme Radicals as if they were Jacobins, determined to overturn the Constitution, and the Whigs dreaded a change in the balance of power, which threatened to imperil their own authority.

Lambton, more than anyone else, was the connecting link between the aristocratic Whig leaders and the irresponsible Radical politicians of the great towns. He represented one of the most ancient families in the kingdom. He was rich and a great employer of labour. He was the son-in-law of Earl Grey, and was welcomed, for his personal qualities no less than his social standing, in the most exclusive circles in English society. There is evidence enough that the social pressure put upon him to take a less pronounced view was both subtle and strong, for to be zealous overmuch in the cause of the unenfranchised masses was not regarded as good form by the privileged classes. On the other hand, he kept himself in close personal relations with the most advanced of the Radicals, and, as time went on, men of the stamp of Grote and Molesworth came to regard him as their rightful leader.

It has been said, and with truth, that the work which Lambton did at this period was of a two-fold kind. He convinced the Whigs that, without some real extension of popular suffrage, the administrative and economic reforms at which they aimed were hopeless, and he showed them at the same time that policy, no less than justice, demanded from them strenuous and sustained efforts for the enfranchisement of the people. They were slow to learn the lesson, it is true, and Lambton was often regarded by them with petulant impatience, and even as a thorn in their side, but he never wavered

in his allegiance to what he regarded as the first conditions of progress, and he stood all through the reign of George IV. like an incarnate conscience in the path of the official leaders of his party.

It was on April 17, 1821, that Lambton made his first great speech in the House of Commons on Parliamentary Reform. He moved for a committee to consider the state of the representation, and laid before the House a proposed Bill for the Reform of Parliament. He laid stress on the growth of national education, and the consequent claims of the middle and lower orders for a share in the government of the country. He said that a great change had passed over England within the last twenty years, and nowhere was it more marked than among the working classes. 'I lately had an opportunity of ascertaining the habits and opinions of a large portion of those classes in the north of England, and I must confess that I was astonished at their vigilant attention to political subjects. There was hardly a village, however secluded from the world, however remote from large cities, however seemingly cut off, by difficulties of access, from communication with society, in which I did not observe the most vigilant attention to all the great points of our national policy, and the most scrutinising observation, not only of measures, but of men.'

He drew a vivid picture of the prevailing political corruption—seats in the House of Commons publicly advertised for sale, and as publicly and notoriously bought and sold, and he set over against it a companion picture of society continually alarmed by accounts of treasons and conspiracies, and then spoke of the overflowing jails, and the barbarous and unnecessary executions which were the outcome of the impolitic severity of the criminal laws. He spoke of the disastrous repression of freedom, the growth of the power of the

Crown, the power of the purse, which the Ministry represented, and the dull weight of despotic authority which the people were unable to resist. 'Ought it to be a matter of surprise,' he exclaimed, 'that the National Debt was increased one thousand millions during the late reign? Can we expect the people to be satisfied with a system through which they have been plundered of these millions to provide for the most wild and extravagant wars—the termination of which has always left them in a worse situation than they were in at the commencement? I contend, therefore, that it is the paramount duty of every true lover of his country to restrain and diminish the influence of the Crown, and to prevent it from destroying those constitutional defences of the rights of the people, which are to be found in a state of representation directly and purely emanating from themselves.'

He went on to show that he was not talking at random, since the great majority of the existing House of Commons had been returned by illegitimate means, and without even the shadow of popular authority. He declared that he was ready at the Bar of the House to prove that a handful of people, one hundred and eighty all told, scattered up and down the kingdom, returned no less than three hundred and fifty members to an assembly which was supposed to represent the will of the nation.

He maintained that, until the reign of Henry VI., all English freemen were entitled to vote for representatives, and he traced, in a brilliant historical survey, the process by which they had been robbed of their rights. He said that those who were opposed to any change in the existing system based their arguments on two contentions. One was that the present system, however faulty in theory, worked well in practice; the other that, but for pocket boroughs, men of talent without

property would be debarred from seats in the House. Then he added, with fine irony, 'That this system works well in practice for honourable gentlemen opposite, their friends, their relations, and their families, I cannot deny—the fact is unquestionably proved by a reference to the Place Lists and Pension Lists; but that it works ill for the country is as surely demonstrated by a view of its present state and condition. If any man will prove to me that the country is rich, flourishing, and contented—happy at home, respected abroad—I will then own to him that the system works as well for the people as it evidently does for the gentlemen opposite. As for the other assertion, I deny that the effect of Reform would be to exclude men of talent without property from the House.'

History has always proved, he went on to say, that men of ability have more quickly found their level under a free and representative government than under one which was corrupt or despotic. But even if the contrary were the case, he maintained it was no argument against reform. The House of Commons was not, after all, intended as a mere arena for the display of talents. It was an institution designed to check the power of the Crown, a place in which honesty and independence, especially in the management of the public revenue, was of vastly more importance than all the rhetorical triumphs which could be held up to popular admiration. He added that public opinion was a force which could not be trifled with, and hinted that, whether they liked it or not, it was making rapid and mighty progress throughout the world. It was possible so to guide it that the Crown might be secured in its privileges, and the liberties of the people at the same time be established. He concluded by bringing forward a scheme for Triennial Parliaments, the extension of the suffrage to all holders of property, the division of

the country into electoral districts, and the disfranchisement of rotten boroughs.

The speech made a great impression on both sides of the House. Canning, who was well disposed neither to the speaker nor his theme, afterwards said privately 'Lambton's speech was quite perfect.' The motion was seconded by Whitbread, and supported by Hobhouse, Sir Robert Wilson and others, and after a long debate the question was adjourned until the following night. Then the unexpected happened; Lambton, who was exhausted by fatigue, and was, moreover, in poor health, quitted the assembly for a few minutes in search of refreshment. Canning suddenly rose and proposed that the debate should be closed, and, before Lambton was aware of what was happening, the trick succeeded, for the motion was carried by a majority of twelve. On his return, he was greeted with satirical laughter. He explained that he had been greatly fatigued by the strain of the previous night, and, in anticipation of a long debate on the present occasion, had retired for a few minutes to recruit his energies. He then moved the adjournment of the House. The Speaker declined to put the question, declaring it to be out of order, and Lambton had no alternative but to bow to his decision, though not before he had made it plain that the nation would understand how the division had been snatched, and the question of its rights begged.

It was said at the time that the despicable expedient, by which he was shut out of the House of Commons on the division upon his own motion for Reform, was deliberately intended to wound his feelings, and, if possible, diminish his popularity. Apart from this, however, the Whigs were hopelessly divided on the question of Reform, whilst the Liverpool Administration at least knew its own mind and was beginning, moreover—thanks to an infusion of fresh blood—to be less

impervious to new ideas. Mr. Rush was at that time American Minister at the Court of St. James's and he summed up the situation, so far as the Opposition was concerned, in a couple of sentences: 'The Whigs are a party of leaders with no rank and file—accomplished men, but as aristocratic as the Tories. They have lost their strong ground, the Reformers have taken it from under them.' There was justice in that shrewd criticism. The Whig leaders had lost touch with the people; the latter had made extravagant demands in extravagant tones, and the consequence was that the former had refused for the moment to take up the case. The strong ground, which the Whigs for the moment had lost, was public confidence in their sincerity and courage. They had hesitated, until the ground had been cut from under their feet.

Brougham had begun by this time his energetic advocacy of the new creed of universal education. Joseph Hume, undeterred by the sarcasms of Castlereagh, was doing his best to let daylight in on the national expenditure, and lost no opportunity of exposing financial abuses and urging economic reform. Lambton and Lord John Russell, in spite of their aristocratic connections, had thrown in their lot with the cause of the people, and were bearing the brunt of the battle for civil and religious liberty. Meanwhile, the jails were crowded with 'Radicals' of the more violent and less responsible sort, and prosecutions for high treason, sedition, and libel, were common all over the country. Men were suffering the death penalty in rows, a tribute to a criminal law, the severity of which was at last becoming a topic of angry discussion even in an unreformed House of Commons.

In Scotland a great agitation was in progress, which had for its object the dismissal of the Liverpool Cabinet. It was about this time that Lambton came for the first

time into close personal relations with Sydney Smith. The two men were thinking along the same lines, and had already much in common. No one was a more welcome guest at Lambton Castle than that witty and outspoken clergyman. He told his host that the Tories in Edinburgh were in despair over the Liberal enthusiasm in that city, and added, in his own inimitable way, 'Some are taking poisoned meal, others are scratching themselves to death, or tearing their red hair and high cheek bones, or calling upon their Scotch Gods, Scabes and Fames.' Lambton Castle was one of the first mansions in the country that was lighted with gas, and Sydney Smith, who had always worked on a winter's night amid a blaze of candles, was delighted with the brilliant success of the new illuminant. 'Dear lady,' he scribbled to one of Lord Chillingham's daughters, 'spend all your fortune in gas apparatus. Better to eat dry bread by its splendour than to dine on wild beef with wax candles. The splendour and glory of Lambton make all other houses mean.'

As the summer approached, the subject which was uppermost, in society at least, was the 'splendour and glory' of the Coronation, whilst the death of Napoleon at St. Helena turned for the moment men's thoughts from the political questions of the hour. The Coronation took place on July 19, with the customary pageantry. It was a day of hollow rejoicings and great anxiety. Lord Eldon declared—he was Lord Chancellor at the time—that everybody went to the ceremony with a feeling of dread. Queen Caroline's claim to be crowned had just been disallowed; she had powerful friends, and, moreover, was not the woman to accept quietly such an indignity. She set out for Westminster Abbey in a coach and six, sought admission at the great door, but was repulsed by the

officials, as she was unable to show any ticket of admittance. Her acceptance of the pension had diminished, almost to the vanishing point, the enthusiasm of the crowd, and she was not spared a few derisive cheers when forced to beat an ignominious retreat.

The strain of the trial had shaken her health, and this last insult quickly brought on an attack of fever, against which, with shattered nerves, she was powerless to rally. Her death, which took place on August 7, was cynically described by one of the Ministers as the 'greatest of all possible deliverances both to His Majesty and the country.' But the tidings created a sense of shame in the country, and her name and her wrongs were once more on the lips of the crowd. The public feeling was intensified when it became known that she had desired her coffin to be inscribed, 'Here lies Caroline of Brunswick, the injured Queen of England,' and had added a last request that she might be buried amongst her own people. The authorities fixed the morning of August 14 for the removal of her remains to Harwich. A strong military escort was ordered, in spite of the request that the funeral might proceed through the streets of London without any protection but that of the people, who were described, with a touch of pride, as her Majesty's only friends in her lifetime.

But the Ministry was determined to prevent any public demonstration, and gave orders, in consequence, that the procession was to pass, as if by stealth, by a circuitous route to Romford. The people were determined that the cortège should pass through the chief thoroughfares. All went well till the procession reached Church Street, Kensington, where it was to turn abruptly to the left and so gain the Edgware Road; but a great crowd blocked the end of Church

Street, and pointed the military down the main road to London. After an altercation, the procession moved on to Hyde Park Corner, and the attempt to turn to the left, though again resisted, prevailed. The mounted escort charged the crowd, plying the backs of their swords, and the hearse was forced through the gates and so gained the Park, where the horses which drew it were whipped almost to a gallop.

The gates were promptly shut, but the people raced through the driving rain up Park Lane, and the swiftest of them were in time to bar the way of the advancing procession. The crowd, which momentarily increased, broke the top of the Park wall, which they flung at the 'Piccadilly Butchers,' as the Life Guards were derisively called. Open riot followed. Many of the soldiers were hurt in the *mêlée*, and before the open street was once more gained two men in the crowd were shot dead. It was at this critical moment that General Sir Robert Wilson, who had been one of the Queen's most devoted personal friends, and was in the procession as a mourner, galloped to the front, expostulated with the soldiers, and peremptorily ordered them to cease firing.

The mob sullenly gave way, and the procession proceeded in indecent haste down the Edgware Road, and it looked as if the official route would, after all, be adopted. But at Tottenham Court Road a formidable barricade had been erected of carts and wagons, which forced the cortège to turn down that thoroughfare. The police magistrate in charge of the procession yielded at this point to the intimidation of the crowd, and changed the line of route, and the procession passed to the City, amid the triumph of the people. In consequence of this, the police magistrate was summarily dismissed, and Sir Robert Wilson, who was member for Southwark, and one of the most distinguished officers in the English

Army, was deprived of his decorations, and dismissed from the service in token of the King's displeasure. Lambton at once protested against such harsh treatment, and subscribed a thousand guineas to the fund which was raised to compensate a brave soldier for the loss thus incurred.

Early in 1822, the question of the removal of Sir Robert Wilson from the Army was raised in the House of Commons, and on February 13 Lambton spoke in defence of his friend. He reminded the House that Sir Robert Wilson had been an officer for twenty years, and had fought and bled in the defence of his country. Wherever hard duty was to be performed the gallant soldier was sure to be found, and he contended that a greater tissue of persecution had never been contrived. Sir Robert had asked for a copy of the accusations against him. He had asked it from Lord Sidmouth, he had asked it from the Commander-in-Chief, he had asked it in every possible quarter, but everywhere it had been refused him. He had offered to meet the charges one by one, and prove himself innocent of them, and no person who had listened to his statement that night could fail to be convinced that he would have redeemed such a pledge. No one who had heard that statement could believe that Sir Robert Wilson had stimulated the people to violence, or tried to obstruct the procession, or authorised the attack of the multitude upon the soldiers. The fact was, Sir Robert had continued with the soldiers, despising danger then as he had often despised it before. It was natural that he should feel irritated when he found a ball passing close to his face, and on looking back saw the soldiers loading a second time. He then told them it was disgraceful to continue firing after the disturbance was over, but even then he did nothing more than make an appeal to them, and the statement that he had in any way assumed the functions of a

military commander was disproved by all the evidence of what passed on that occasion.

Lambton entreated the House to bear in mind that Sir Robert had come direct from Paris to the funeral, and had had no opportunity of consultation with any one before he found himself with the mourners at Bradenburgh House. He went on to show the petty persecution to which he had been exposed by the military authorities, and said that the only offence he had committed was that he was present at the Queen's funeral at all. He begged the House to consider the situation in which Sir Robert stood, and they would see that he had acted upon the best feelings of the human heart, since to pay the last tribute of respect to a Queen whom he served was surely consistent with the honour and gratitude of a gentleman. He wished them to remember that Sir Robert was not there as a military man at all. He was on half-pay, and in the situation of a civilian. He left his position in the procession merely to keep the peace, 'actuated by the same motive which would have induced myself or any other member of the House—the wish to prevent an outrage which endangered the King's subjects.' It was a disgrace to the nation that such a man should be dismissed from the service for saying a few impetuous words to the soldiers under such provocation.

The motion before the House for the production of copies of the correspondence between Sir Robert and the Commander-in-Chief was resisted by Ministers, on the ground of the constitutional prerogative of the King to dismiss any officer, whether he had purchased his commissions or not. In the division 199 members voted for the Government, and 97 in favour of the motion. On the accession of William IV., Sir Robert was reinstated, with the rank of Lieutenant-General.

A few weeks after the debate, on March 22, Lambton

presented a petition from nearly five thousand persons of Newcastle-on-Tyne, praying for the liberation of 'Orator' Hunt from jail—a demagogue for whom, on personal grounds, he had little sympathy. Hunt was one of the violent Radicals, never tired of ridiculing the Whig leaders, the kind of man whom Lord Grey regarded as, in reality, the worst foe to progress, and one of the class whom Lambton afterwards felt compelled to denounce as 'brawling, ignorant, and mischievous quacks,' who imperilled the cause of Reform by violent and vulgar abuse. It required some courage to take up the case of such a person, but Lambton felt that Hunt had been treated in a most unjustifiable manner. He denounced the sentence passed upon him for sedition as most severe, and stated that it had been aggravated by hardships and indignities, either with the sanction of the visiting magistrates of the prison, or, at least, with their connivance. He refused to enter into any questions concerning either the political opinions or personal character of Mr. Hunt, but recommended him as a fit object for the clemency of the Crown, as a man who was suffering under injustice. The petition was rejected by a majority of more than one hundred.

Two days later Lambton was again on his feet, demanding the production of papers concerning a riot in Dublin in the previous December, which had resulted in the committal to jail of certain persons, known to be obnoxious to the Government, on a charge of conspiracy, with intent to murder the Lord Lieutenant. Lambton asserted that the whole affair had been grossly exaggerated, and was likely to lead to a miscarriage of justice. Was the House to be told, he asked, that, because factions existed to a lamentable extent in Ireland, they were not to inquire into a particular case of abuse in the administration of justice in that country when it was brought under their notice? If that

doctrine were recognised there would be an end to the confidence which the people placed in the House of Commons as the ultimate tribunal of justice. The motion was lost by a majority of sixteen votes.

In the late summer George IV.'s brother, H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex, honoured Lambton with a brief visit. The Duke, as all the world knows, had mortally offended his father, George III., by his romantic marriage with Lady Augusta Murray, daughter of the Earl of Dunmore. When George IV. came to the throne the Duke's position at Court was more than doubtful, not merely because of his marriage, which he refused to accept as annulled, but also in consequence of his strong and outspoken sympathies with the Whigs. Justice has never been done to the influence of the Duke of Sussex during the reigns of George IV. and William IV.; in fact, he is, to a large extent, one of the suppressed personages of history. He was cheered in the streets of London at Queen Caroline's trial. He won the enthusiastic homage, not merely of the Catholics, but of all advocates of religious toleration, by his early and consistent support of the demand for Emancipation. He stood by Lord Grey in the struggle for Reform, and, previous to that struggle, his love of liberty was known to be so pronounced, that the Greek Deputies of 1825 were anxious, before they approached Prince Leopold, to make sure that the Duke could not be induced to accept the position.

His friendship with Lambton grew out of his attachment to his father, and was strengthened by a common devotion to Freemasonry, as well as, to a large extent, by community of political interests. His Royal Highness, on August 30, visited the city of Durham, where he was received with masonic honours. On the following day the Duke visited Sunderland, descending the river Wear with Lambton in his friend's barge. The

ships in the harbour were decorated in his honour, and his reception was of a kind which George IV. had no chance of receiving in the north of England. On September 2 the Duke paid an eagerly expected visit to Newcastle-on-Tyne, in order to lay the foundation-stone of the Literary and Philosophical Institute in Westgate Street. When the carriage arrived at the outskirts of Gateshead, the six horses which had drawn it from Lambton were taken out by the populace, and the Royal visitor, Lady Louisa Lambton, and her husband were drawn by the crowd, amid enthusiastic cheers, to the Tyne Bridge. Here the cavalcade was met by the Sheriff of Newcastle and other local authorities, and formally welcomed. As the procession crossed the bridge a salute of twenty-one guns was fired from the Castle, and as soon as the carriage had passed from Durham to Northumberland, Sir Matthew White Ridley, M.P. for the borough, requested that the people of Newcastle should now have the honour of drawing the Duke through the streets of that ancient town. After various masonic and civic functions, the foundation stone of the Library was duly laid, in the presence of a vast assemblage of people, and a banquet was afterwards held at the Assembly Rooms. The Duke, on September 4, posted through Alnwick on his way to Howick as the guest of Lord Grey.

All through the spring Lambton was actively engaged in helping Sir Robert Wilson, who had gone to Spain, where a desperate struggle was in progress between the forces of despotism and revolution. Ferdinand VII. was a prisoner in his own palace, and this led to the armed intervention of France. After some months of fighting, the King was restored to power, a triumph which extinguished the hopes of the progressive party. Lambton's part in the formation of the Spanish Committee will be seen from the following letter.

'London: May 27, 1823.

'My dear Wilson,—I was delighted, as you may suppose, to hear of your reception in Spain, which did the Spanish nation honour, and was no more than your due. It was the more acceptable because reports had been circulated that you had been coldly received and were about to return. I uniformly declared my disbelief of them, and was therefore most happy to be able positively and officially to contradict them. My next object was to organise something here which should second your efforts. This could only be done by a subscription, originating in a public meeting; and it was, moreover, essential to arrange that all the exertions made by any committee here, dealing with that subscription should place all their means, or the great proportion of them, at your disposal. On every ground of policy it is better that any effort made by England, or rather by English feeling, should be directed to one point instead of being wasted and frittered away in different parts of Spain. I imagine, in addition, that it will give you greater importance and weight with the Spanish Government, and therefore increase your means of assisting the common cause, if those efforts should be brought to bear under your sole and special direction. With these feelings, therefore, I attended a meeting of the Spanish Sub-Committee at the Crown and Anchor to day, and was in the chair, and everything has been happily arranged. The public meeting is to be held at the London Tavern on Monday next. I believe Lord W. Bentinck will be in the chair. I urged the necessity of doing something immediately in the way of sending arms to Vigo, as you suggested, and therefore proposed that we should begin a subscription. This was agreed to, and a subscription commenced in the room. I felt it to be a cause which required some personal pecuniary sacrifice, and therefore put my

name down for 1,000*l.* Several smaller sums were subscribed amounting to nearly 500*l.* more. This will do very well to start with and to commence a subscription at the general meeting. . . . The defection of Abisbal induces people here to think it is all over with the constitutional cause. Any authentic intelligence therefore you can send, proving the fixed determination of the Cortes and Government to proceed in their work of resistance to the French, and their intention not to enter into any compromise, as well as any proofs of the same spirit being general throughout the provinces, will be of great service.

'Yours ever,

'J. G. LAMBTON.'

In a later note, Lambton announced to Wilson that a steam-packet, bearing arms and munitions of war, was to sail to Corunna in the course of a few days.

When Ferdinand had been restored to power, with the help of French bayonets, all the acts of the Cortes were annulled, the Jesuits were recalled, and the Inquisition resumed its sway. The Great Powers were inclined to force the Spanish colonies to allegiance, but Canning interposed, with the result that the independence of the Spanish American colonies was recognised by the British Government. 'I resolved,' were his words, 'that if France had Spain, it should not be Spain with the Indies. I called in the New World to redress the balance of the old.'

Whilst the war in Spain was still undecided—it lasted until November 1823—Lambton gave expression to his views of the political situation. He refused to take an alarmist view of what was happening abroad, and declared that, in his opinion, there was no Power in Europe at the moment—Russia not excepted—which was strong enough to provoke a struggle for supremacy.

He added that if Russia was to attempt to coerce the Spanish colonies, he, for one, should consider that it was the wisest policy for England to interpose in their defence. As to home politics, he deplored that the subject of economy had been entirely thrust aside by the diversions arising from treasons and conspiracies.

There are many letters of Wilson's in existence, written in the summer of 1823, which show how keen was the appreciation in Spain of Lambton's energetic action. He states that the Spanish patriotic party would express their own gratitude to him, and that the news of the help given by the Spanish Committee in London had thrilled the whole country:—'The publication of the proceedings at the London Tavern has met with prodigious success. The whole population of town and country is struggling for copies, and the joy is great.' On September 30, another note is struck by this gallant soldier of fortune: 'We are in a desperate crisis, revolt and poverty, twin sisters, have obliged the Cortes to give Ministers full power to treat with the King. It was a hard measure, but the only one to save Cadiz from the French.' A few weeks later, Hobhouse wrote to Lambton, expressing fears that the Spanish business was in too bad a way even for their mutual friend, Sir Robert, to put right, and within a month the whole movement collapsed. Wilson apprehended that, if he returned to England, he would be seized and imprisoned under the Foreign Enlistment Act, and added that he had almost resolved to take refuge with his family in America, but, reassured by his friends, he returned to England, and took his place once more in the House of Commons.

He no sooner arrived than he heard a report that Lambton was about to resign his seat, and thought that the statement might be true, since the cause of Reform seemed at the moment more hopeless than ever.

But when Parliament met in the spring of 1824, Lambton opposed the renewal of the Alien Bill, and quickly made himself heard in an energetic protest on the manner in which the liberty of the Press was imperilled in India. On May 25 he brought forward a petition from Mr. James Silk Buckingham, late proprietor and editor of the 'Calcutta Journal,' complaining of a series of arbitrary enactments on the part of the Government of India, which seemed determined to crush anything in the nature of outspoken criticism. 'I consider this petition to be one of great importance, because it involves a question of the deepest interest—I mean the liberty of the Press—a question which in every country is intimately interwoven with the best interests and well-being of society, and in no country is of more vital importance than in India, where, as I contend, the safety of our Empire and the happiness of the almost countless millions committed to our charge, depend—not on the continuance of ignorance and consequently of slavery—but on the diffusion of knowledge and education, the surest, nay, the only mode of convincing the native population of the benefits which they derive from our Government.'

In a speech of great clearness and showing a remarkable grasp of the whole problem of Indian administration, Lambton described the harsh treatment which Buckingham had experienced. The truth was that the boldness with which Buckingham, who established the 'Calcutta Journal' in 1818, censured the abuses of the Indian Government, had led the authorities to suppress that journal, and to expel its editor from India in 1823. Lambton declared that such treatment was due to the exercise of a spirit of wanton and aggravated despotism: 'If such things are allowed to go unredressed, the responsibility of the Indian Government is virtually at an end. Those Acts of Parliament

which give the East India Company their power will be efficient only when their profit and dominion are concerned, but powerless when the liberties and properties of Englishmen are at stake; and the grossest acts of tyranny and injustice may, in future, be perpetrated with such impunity as may ultimately, I fear, endanger the very existence of our supremacy in India.'

It was not until comparatively late in Buckingham's life that the East India Company acknowledged the injustice of the proceedings against him, which Lambton in this speech exposed, by granting him a pension of 200*l.* a year. Buckingham is chiefly remembered now as a founder in 1828 of the 'Athenæum,' a journal which soon passed under the control of John Sterling. In the new Parliament, which assembled after the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832, Buckingham sat as member for Sheffield.

Later in the session, on June 14, Lambton presented Haydon's petition to the House of Commons for the encouragement of the Fine Arts. He described that erratic man of genius as well known for his misfortunes, no less than his talents. Historical painting was less encouraged in England than any other branch of art, in spite of the fact that the Royal Academy had been established for the purpose of fostering it. It was impossible that historical painting could be cultivated unless it received public patronage, as was the case abroad. George III. had given much encouragement to artists in this direction, but private individuals were unable to purchase large historical works, and had to be content with cabinet pictures. It was proposed that a sum of money, in the shape of an annual grant, should be set apart for the purchase of meritorious paintings of historical significance, a proposal which Lambton urged the Government to accept. Nothing came of the scheme at the time, and Haydon, a

shiftless and strangely emotional man, eventually committed suicide, in chagrin at the neglect of his ambitious projects for the revival of British art. Lambton did his best in the matter, and Haydon himself was of that opinion.

The painter described the young statesman as a man who was fearless and independent, and reckless of any one's opinion. He said, 'From Lambton only have I ever got the truth. He begged me not to have the least dependence on the promises of any man connected with the Government, for I might rely upon it the great hobby-horse now was the National Gallery, where old pictures were the first object of consideration.' Before the petition was presented, Lambton had assured him that he had little hope in the matter. He thrashed the proposal out in a talk with the sensitive, irritable artist. He told him that the Government mistrusted themselves, and asked, in the event of a commission, who were to judge. Haydon replied that he was happy to learn that they mistrusted themselves, and said if they had done so long ago, St. Paul's would not have been disgraced in the artistic sense. He added that the decision might rest with six artists and six connoisseurs. Lambton cited the case of the commission to Turner for Greenwich Hospital, adding that the Government were not satisfied with the result, which was an obstacle to any fresh departure. Haydon's historical ambition, however, was not lost sight of, and in 1832, when Lambton was in office, the artist received a commission to paint the celebrated Reform Banquet picture, the first rough sketch of which was drawn in pen and ink in a letter to Lambton. His proposals eventually bore fruit in the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament with historical frescoes, by the most distinguished artists of the period.

CHAPTER VII

LAMBTON'S SUPPORT OF CANNING

To sum up, may I be whipped for it, but I assert that we ought to love Canning.—Princess Lieven.

1824–1828

Lambton's views on the Irish Franchise Bill—Attacked by his friends—Illness, and sojourn in Naples—Domestic relationships—Duel with T. W. Beaumont—Lambton and the shoemaker—Accession of Canning to power, and Lambton's support of his policy—Lambton raised to the Peerage—The Goderich Government—Some personal characteristics of Lord Durham—His deep affection for his eldest son—Home life—Letters of 'Master Lambton.'

Catholic Emancipation, to which the Whigs had been pledged for a quarter of a century, seemed coming within the range of practical politics in 1825, though the forces opposed to it were formidable enough to protract the struggle for another three or four years. But the work of the Catholic Association had already done much to advance the question, and the reconstruction of the Liverpool Administration, notably the presence in the Cabinet of Sir Robert Peel, was in itself an evidence of a change of front. Though there was no change of attitude as yet on the subject, there were forces secretly at work, having nothing in common with the implacable hostility to the measure which had hitherto prevailed. In March Sir Francis Burdett introduced a Bill dealing with the Catholic claims, which passed the Commons with a majority of twenty-one, but was thrown out in the Lords on the second reading. Alarmed at the vote in the Commons, the

Tories immediately introduced the Irish Franchise Bill, which represented a compromise. The Government was prepared to concede, to a certain degree, Catholic Emancipation, but only on conditions which Lambton thought destroyed, not merely the grace, but the advantage of such a concession. They proposed the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders, and the endowment of the Catholic clergy in Ireland.

The position which Lambton took up in the debate was that the evidence which had been placed before the Irish Committee was not sufficient to induce him to vote for such a drastic measure. He protested against the principle of the Bill, which would disfranchise the children of the existing electors, and declared that he, for his part, would never consent to any measure which had for its object a limitation of the elective franchise of the people. He held that if the House were to carry Catholic Emancipation side by side with the infliction of these new disabilities, the loss would be greater than the gain. He was severely attacked from his own side of the House for his speech, and by no one more violently than Brougham. The hot words which passed between the two men then, for the first time in public, was the little rift in the lute, which afterwards widened, until harmony was lost in discord. Lambton was determined never to consent to Catholic Emancipation with qualifications. He knew that the temper of the country was rising on the subject, and he preferred to wait until public opinion grew resistless. Compromise was not to his mind, and therefore he determined to wait until it was no remedy. He distrusted the men, he asserted, who most strongly supported the measure, and quoted against them *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*. Great pressure was put upon him by the Whigs to adopt another course, but without avail. He declared, in reply, that he would not be brow-

beaten, he had never given a vote except from sincere conviction, and was prepared to pursue the same course now, even though it meant the loss of the dearest friendships he had in the world. He was not called to make such a sacrifice, but his independence was rewarded by a coolness, which made a man of his temperament wince.

But this rupture of friendly relations was, happily, short-lived, at least in some directions. Hot words had passed between Lambton and his friend John Cam Hobhouse, afterwards Lord Broughton, on Lambton's opposition to the Relief Bill. 'On May 15th,' says Lord Broughton, 'I saw Lambton at Brooks's. There had been a coolness between us since our squabble; but he came up and shook hands with me. He said he was willing to do anything to show that the difference between Burdett and me and him had not affected his regard for us. I remarked that he could do that easily if he would come to our annual Westminster dinner on Monday, May 23rd. He replied that he had always intended to come to the dinner, and that he would do or say anything that might be considered advisable on the occasion. I told him that he was a good fellow, and I was very glad of this renewal of friendship with him. He had many excellent qualities, obscured a little by a hasty temper and too much home indulgence.'

There is no need to dwell at length on the events of the next few years. Lambton was restless and ill—keenly alive to the unredressed grievances of the people, but powerless to help them. He was between the upper and the nether millstones of aristocratic Whig apathy and alarm, and the violence and extravagance of Radical orators of the baser sort. The struggle proved almost too much for a man of his highly strung and sensitive temperament. He got the cold shoulder in quarters where he expected confidence, and it was impossible for

him to explain the true inwardness of the political situation to those who were inclined to chide him for delay, without disloyalty to statesmen to whom he was allied by family ties, and, to a certain extent, by conviction.

He was so ill at Christmas, 1825, that the greatest alarm was felt in his own household as to the issue. He told his brother Hedworth that the 'nervous rheumatism' which assailed him was almost insupportable. 'The tortures which I have suffered in my head I cannot describe to you.' Early in the new year a widespread rumour of his death had to be publicly contradicted. It would seem, indeed, that already complaints from which he afterwards suffered cruelly—gall-stones and incipient disease of the liver—were beginning to undermine his strength, and to make havoc of a temper which, though generous, was vulnerable. Lady Louisa—ever a most dutiful daughter, as well as a singularly devoted wife—was also in indifferent health, and between 1826 and 1828 she and Lambton were compelled to be much abroad, especially as the health of their eldest child, the beautiful 'Master Lambton' of Lawrence's famous picture, was already beginning to cause them solicitude. They took a villa at Naples, and Lambton was in Italy for nearly a year, though he kept himself always in touch, not merely with his personal friends, but with public affairs in England.

As soon as his own health was re-established, he went to and fro—an arduous journey in those days—between Naples and London, paying flying visits when in England to his property in the north. Whenever he appeared amongst his own people his presence awakened the greatest enthusiasm, both on public and private grounds. The working classes regarded him as the great champion of their grievances, and his own colliers—an army of men—knew him as a generous and con-

siderate master. The names by which he was known in Northumberland and Durham were 'Radical Jack' and the 'King of the Colliers,' and to the last day of his life he was proud of the homage of his own people.

Nothing is more attractive in his life than the strength of his affection. His letters to his wife and children are, in many cases, almost too intimate and beautiful to quote. They reveal the nobility of the man, the almost feminine tenderness of his nature, and the need—it was splendidly met by those of his own household—which he felt for sympathy. Before the world Lambton stood dauntless, with clean-cut convictions and iron will, equal, in short, to every hazard of fortune. But he was extremely human, very dependent, and altogether lovable in private life, in spite of little foibles of pride and caprice, which only served to throw into relief the generosity and delicacy of a supremely attractive, finely poised, and beautiful nature. He was imperious sometimes to the point of arrogancy, and exacting, even to the limits of patience; but these qualities were of the kind which cut two ways—he was incapable of meanness and was the soul of honour.

Masterly inactivity was the one thing of all others which was impossible to a man of his ardent temperament, and perhaps at times he was a little unjust to others, who lacked his political prescience, and moved, in consequence, more slowly. It is notorious that Lord Grey had but small sympathy with the sweeping, but statesmanlike proposals for reform which Lambton brought before the House of Commons in 1821. Even ten years later the Whigs had to screw their courage up to advocate the compromise which culminated in the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832. Many of them thought it a leap in the dark, and all of them an heroic, if not desperate, measure. And yet it fell far short of what Lambton then urged and had advocated, at an

age when most public men are still in leading strings. In the late twenties he was dispirited and ill at ease. Men of his own rank regarded him as a visionary and a dangerous innovator, and the masses, who little knew how sorely he was let and hindered behind the scenes, were inclined to think that he had been cajoled or bullied into silence by the Whigs. His private letters show how he winced and chafed at his position. He was between two political fires, and those who know all the circumstances are not surprised—apart from the crowning chagrin of his life—that he died in mid career. The wonder is that, with such a temperament, with such ideals and such obstacles, he lived to weather so many storms and to accomplish so great and permanent a work.

One of the most stubborn political fights in the country occurred at the election for the county of Northumberland, in the summer of 1826. The poll opened on June 20, and was not closed till July 6. For more than a fortnight the battle raged at the hustings and in public meetings. The candidates were Lord Howick (afterwards third Earl Grey), the Hon. H. T. Liddell (afterwards Lord Ravensworth), Mr. Matthew Bell, and Mr. T. W. Beaumont. Lambton, though still out of health, took an active part in the struggle, and made speeches on behalf of his brother-in-law at Morpeth, Alnwick, North Shields, and other places, and in the end became implicated in a violent personal quarrel on the hustings at Alnwick with Mr. Beaumont, on Friday, June 30.

The late Mr. John Clayton, Town Clerk of Newcastle-on-Tyne for many years, was present on the occasion, and described the scene to the present writer. Lord Howick had scarcely concluded a vigorous speech, when Mr. Beaumont sprang to his feet and accused Lambton of prompting his brother-in-law at almost

every sentence. The latter indignantly denied the charge. Whereupon Mr. Beaumont practically called him a liar, within the hearing of Lady Louisa, who sat at a window in a house adjoining the hustings. Lambton, as far as a hostile band of music would allow him, repudiated the charge with scorn, and said that no one who had listened to Lord Howick's electioneering speeches would deem that he needed prompting by any man. He had made, he admitted, a few running comments as the speech proceeded, but the idea of prompting a man like Lord Howick had never entered his head. Since no apology was forthcoming, he sent a challenge the same day to Mr. Beaumont, and it was arranged the parties should fight a duel at nine o'clock the same evening on Alnwick Moor. The authorities were, however, on the alert, and so great was the public excitement that it was impossible to fight out the issue, unmolested, in the neighbourhood of the county town. It was agreed, therefore, that they should meet next day at Belford.

Lord Grey galloped on horseback through the night, unattended, from Howick to Alnwick, where he arrived as dawn was breaking, under the impression that the duel was to be fought in that locality, and with the hope of preventing it, but Lambton was already on his way to Belford. The duel was fought with pistols on Bamborough Sands, just below the castle, at four o'clock on Saturday afternoon. Throughout the whole of that day the most wild and contradictory rumours were afloat, and the friends of both parties were in a state of miserable suspense. Nothing was known concerning the result until the arrival of the Edinburgh mail-coach at Alnwick in the evening, when Captain Walter Ker announced to the excited crowd in the streets: 'Gentlemen, I have the greatest pleasure in informing you that the duel is over, and without bloodshed. After an exchange of shots the seconds interfered, and the parties

separated.' The affair was made the subject of a cartoon, and the ballad-mongers drove a thriving trade by singing the praises of Radical Jack all through the autumn in the streets of every market town in the north.

Lambton's own election for Durham was a much less exciting affair, for he was returned unopposed, amid a shower of compliments instead of bullets. He admitted that a change for the better had come over the Government, and laid stress on the accession and services of two new members of it, Canning and Peel. The former, he said, was a man of the very highest talents and character, who, in taking office, knew very well that he was not supported by the Tory aristocracy. 'Canning,' he added, 'is aware that the nobility he has to depend upon is the nobility of the mind, and the co-operation and aid which he seeks is that of the people rather than the High Church and Tory Party.' He spoke with enthusiasm of Peel's efforts to reform the criminal code, and said that, if his state of health had allowed him to be in Parliament on several recent occasions, he would have given the Ministry his support, and with the same feeling of independence which had prompted him to oppose them when they were carrying into effect measures which threatened the liberty of the subject.

An amusing incident occurred during Lambton's canvass. He had gone to solicit the vote of a shoemaker, who, like most of his class, was believed to be an ardent Radical. The man lived up three flights of stairs, and, as soon as Lambton and his supporters appeared at the door, the cobbler brusquely exclaimed, 'Get out of my house, Sir. No, Sir, no parley. Go, Sir. An Englishman's house is his castle. I have not one word to say to you till you walk downstairs.' The man's tones were so peremptory, and his attitude

so menacing, that the disconcerted candidate and his friends had to accept the situation. The cobbler promptly followed them to the foot of the stairs, and, when it was reached, asked, 'And now, how do you like this treatment, Mr. Lambton?' 'Not at all,' replied Lambton, 'but as I see you are a bit of a humourist, I don't think your vote so hopeless, as you appear to want me to do. I always understood you to be a good Whig.' 'And so I am,' said the shoemaker. 'And you are welcome to my vote, Sir. But your gamekeeper turned me out of your field, when I was going to enjoy a bit of fishing in the Wear, on the only holiday I allowed myself this spring, and as this house is all my worldly preserves, I thought I would just let you try how you would like such treatment yourself.' Lambton and this independent elector parted good friends, and the former used to tell the story with glee, though he admitted that it rather told against his own arguments for the adoption of the ballot.

At a complimentary dinner, given at North Shields, to Lord Howick, who had been defeated at the Northumberland election, in which Lambton had taken so exciting a part, the latter referred to the condition of affairs in the north in the autumn of 1819, when the Manchester Massacres, as they were called, had driven the working classes to the verge of rebellion. 'It is now not quite seven years since Lord Grey and myself returned from our duties in Parliament to this neighbourhood. We were told that the men of the north were in rebellion, and were united in societies to overturn the Constitution. I was told that my property was to be partitioned, and that I should find others enjoying it. I said "I don't believe it, but if it be true, I would much rather that my property be divided among my friends in the north, than among the corruptionists of the House of Commons." I was told that

there were 100,000 men in arms amongst you, but I knew you were true and loyal to the King, and to the Constitution and liberties of the country, and I was not deceived—for such I found you.' Turning to the questions of the day, he asked 'What was it that, when the standard of Napoleon Bonaparte—that great but ambitious man, for he was both—was carried in triumph from the walls of Lisbon to Vienna, to Berlin, and even to Moscow, what was it, when every power in Europe quailed before him, which enabled us to withstand his mighty power? What was it but the Union Jack of England!' (Loud cheers.) 'I therefore dread every measure that tends to lessen our naval superiority.'

Lambton's health was so unsatisfactory in the early autumn of 1826, that he determined to spend the winter abroad. He gave up his racing establishment, and sold his stud, and the Lambton Park races became, in consequence, only a memory to lovers of the Turf in the north. He had met with an accident at Newmarket some months before, having slipped on a stone staircase, with the result that he received a blow on the back of his head, rendering him unconscious—a shock to his overwrought nervous system which helped to undermine his health. But the insidious beginnings of disease of the liver, a complaint which caused him much physical distress in his later years, and was responsible for the excitement under which he at times laboured, were a serious cause for anxiety. It was said at the time that he had gone abroad for three years, and meant to spend the first in Italy, the second in France, and the third in Germany, but there was no truth in the assertion. The fact was that, though ill and chagrined with the political situation, he was at once too restless and too patriotic to be longer out of the country than he could help, and, as a matter of fact, he made the long journey between London and the south of Europe in

the course of the next eighteen months more frequently than his physicians thought advisable.

Lord Liverpool's death in the spring of 1827 resulted, after many political intrigues, in the accession, in April, of Canning to power as Prime Minister of a Coalition Government. The great Minister had waited long and worked hard for ascendency, and George IV., who had at one time cordially detested him—now conquered by the singular charm and address of the man—was one of the most enthusiastic of his friends. But Canning had powerful foes in his own camp, notably Wellington and Peel, who refused to join the Administration, and Lord Eldon—an uncompromising Tory of the old school, who judiciously seized the opportunity to retire from public life, after having held the post of Lord Chancellor for a quarter of a century. Canning was a friend of civil and religious liberty, and was pledged to Catholic Emancipation, a question which was coming rapidly to the front. The advent of Canning to power meant the adhesion of many influential men of Whig opinions, though of Tory alliances, who felt that it was useless to continue the policy of resistance to all change, which men of the stamp of Castlereagh, Eldon, and Wellington represented. Canning's triumph did not merely extend to far-seeing members of his own party, who had grown impatient of the old Tory creed. His brilliant genius, to borrow the words of Lord Dalling, rallied round him everyone in the Commons and in the country who had enlightened ideas and generous feelings—public men who were desirous to see England take the lead in modern civilisation, both in her foreign policy and in her attitude to the unredressed grievances of her own people.

At the same time, a great many of the Tories looked askance at Canning, not merely because of his opinions on Catholic Emancipation, but because he was not, in

the old jargon, a member of the governing families of the kingdom. To take Disraeli's description of himself, he 'stood merely on his head.' It is certain that he could never have formed a Government at all if the more influential of the Whig leaders had not thrown in their lot with him. There was one conspicuous exception. Lord Grey—it was one of the most equivocal acts of his life—refused to have anything whatever to do with a Minister who, after all, as it was said at the time, represented the only Liberal ideas which the rank and file of the English people were at that moment prepared to entertain. It is not so easy to understand the reasoning which led him to regard Canning as little better than a political adventurer, but the fact remains, as his own letters to the Princess Lieven show, and his ironical and contemptuous allusions in Parliament still further attest, that his judgment in this matter was curiously warped. He fought against the idea that Canning was inevitable, and steadfastly refused to make common cause with him. He affected the belief that his own political career was at an end, and stood somewhat ostentatiously aloof, yet Lord Dalling, with justice, asserts that, if Canning had not obtained power by the adhesion at that moment of the best men in the country, Lord Grey would never have had a party at his back sufficiently strong to take office. 'If Canning,' to borrow Lord Dalling's own words, 'had not become Prime Minister when he did, Lord Grey would not have obtained political ascendency three years afterwards.'

Lambton did not share his father-in-law's scruples. He believed, to fall back on a familiar phrase, that half a loaf was better than no bread, and therefore he heartily accepted Canning's leadership, and did so without the surrender of one jot of his political convictions. He recognised that Canning was a long way in advance of

his party, and held that it was the duty of everyone who desired that progress should advance, if not by leaps and bounds, yet steadily, to strengthen his hands. Catholic Emancipation and the Abolition of Religious Tests were the questions which were rapidly coming to the front, and Canning's enthusiasm for them was not to be doubted, and it was idle to cavil at the men who advanced such principles, if the chance of victory lay within their reach. Lambton's allegiance was all the more remarkable because he had been violently opposed to Canning at an earlier stage in his career, and he did not now escape the cheap taunt of inconsistency. This was especially the case when he accepted a peerage, which some people were ungenerous enough to say at the time was a bribe on Canning's part to secure, not merely his own allegiance, but that of Lord Grey. Those who held that view grossly misrepresented both men. Lord Grey always, in small matters as well as great, had the courage of his convictions, and was not to be moved a hair's-breadth from the course he elected to follow by any considerations of that kind. At the same time, it is not easy, in view of all the facts, to escape the conclusion that, apart from personal antipathy, he was to some extent jealous of Canning.

Lambton, on the other hand, knew the risk of misrepresentation which he ran, but neither the disapproval of the Leader of the Whig party, to whom he was so closely related, nor the insinuations of extreme Radicals, who looked askance at Canning on other grounds, were of the least avail when once he had persuaded himself that to throw in his lot with that statesman at such a crisis was a public duty. Brougham, who assuredly did not love him, declared that he was 'wholly incapable of making any sacrifice of his principles' to obtain a peerage. He declared that Lambton supported Canning 'purely upon the ground of disuniting' the old and impossible

Tory party. At the same time, it is plain that he felt himself entitled, both by lineage and wealth, to a seat in the House of Lords, and he never forgot that his grandfather had been offered a peerage when the Duke of Portland joined Pitt in 1793, and had refused it because his principles would not allow him to abandon Fox. Brougham admits that Lambton was extremely modest in regard to his own abilities, and was not merely just but ardent, whenever the claims of other men came under discussion. It seemed, indeed, to those who knew him, as if he underrated his own personal talents, whilst laying too much stress on the claims of his family, and his stake in the country as a landlord and an employer of labour, which were of course not open to question.

Canning's tenure of power was short-lived. His Ministry scarcely lasted four months, but, short as it was, it left its mark on English policy, both at home and abroad. It has been claimed for him, and with truth, that he brought together at a critical moment all the elements of a great Liberal party—a party that was strong enough to force the hand of the Duke of Wellington, two years later, over Catholic Emancipation, and to bring Lord Grey to power, pledged to Parliamentary Reform, when, in 1830, a new and better reign began. The one great constructive act of Canning's Administration was the Treaty of London, which was signed July 6, 1827. It stipulated that Greece, whilst tributary to Turkey, should be, in other respects, independent. Hostilities were at once to cease, and the Sultan was warned that, unless he accepted the mediation of the Powers within a month, Greece would be upheld in the assertion of her entire independence. This treaty was Canning's last act, and it was one which made for liberty. He was seized with illness at the beginning of August, and

died on the 8th of that month, prematurely worn out with excessive labours, at the age of fifty-seven.

'The King,' wrote Lambton, 'has made Goderich Premier, and everything is to go on as before. The Tories are woefully disappointed. They expected that his Majesty would have sent for the Duke of Wellington. He went down to Lord Maryborough's cottage at Windsor Park, that he might be ready to obey the King's summons, who, however, it seems, never once thought about him. None of the particular arrangements are yet known, except that the Duke of Portland is to be President of the Council, in the room of Lord Harrowby, who has resigned.' The relations between the King and the Cabinet were, from the first, somewhat strained. George IV. had taken the unusual course of insisting on the Duke of Portland being appointed to the post to which Lambton alludes, and the Whigs in Lord Goderich's Ministry, though they had no personal objections to the Duke, did not relish the King's insistence. Lambton thought that Lord Holland, who was a host in himself, would come in, but he was content to bide his time, and to wait for the turn of the tide which made Grey inevitable.

The King's health, as well as his temper, were uncertain, and it was obvious to everyone about the Court that the reign was drawing to an end. George IV. was, in truth, at this time, leading a most curious life—sleeping badly, lying in bed till six in the afternoon, and wearing everybody out by perpetual demands that they should dance attendance upon him, and also by his suspicious and irritable temper. He was beginning to say he was tired to death of public affairs, and in December his peremptory manner, and the constant interference of the Duke of Cumberland on his behalf, rendered Goderich's position impossible. He resigned, in consequence, and the King, true to his rôle of an

ill-used man, made no secret of his satisfaction. His Majesty's account of the transaction is not a little diverting. He declared that he did not see why he was to be the only gentleman in his dominions who was not allowed to eat his Christmas dinner in peace. Lambton began to think that the way was being made smooth for Grey, but George IV., who dreaded the Whigs as a party, and had no love for Grey as a man, was of another mind. He sent for Wellington, and the Duke, who by this time was not ambitious of the task, bowed to the inevitable, and, when Parliament met, was in office, with Palmerston and Peel, Lyndhurst and Huskisson at his back. Wellington's Ministry altogether failed to satisfy the ultra-Tories, who even went so far as to describe it as a Whig Cabinet, a statement which Lambton ridiculed, declaring that, besides the Duke, it consisted of 'Tory clerks or Tory officers, one nondescript—Lord Ellenborough, and one Whig—Lord Rosslyn!'

Goderich was an easy, weak, irresolute man, and George IV. just then was in a singularly petulant, not to say over-bearing, mood. He hated the Whigs, and was hotly opposed to Catholic Emancipation, and would hear nothing about the growing demand for political Reform, though the industrial revolution had created vast urban populations, which had no voice whatever in the government of the country. If Canning had represented a compromise, Goderich represented merely time to look round, whilst Wellington stood for reaction and the policy of no surrender, though the logic of events compelled the great soldier before long to beat a strategic retreat from that uncompromising attitude.

Lord Goderich was a statesman almost ludicrously incapable of controlling the situation, and, early in January 1828, his Ministry collapsed through internal

dissensions—due largely to a conflict of opinion between Herries and Huskisson—without having ever encountered Parliament. Lambton was gazetted a peer, on January 18, 1828, with the title of Baron Durham, and at the same time it was officially announced that the King had raised to the dignity of a Viscountess the widow of the Right Hon. George Canning.

Here it may be well to allow Lambton, or Lord Durham as he must henceforth be called, to speak for himself: 'On my return from the Continent, in December 1827, Lord Goderich communicated to me his Majesty's intention to call me to the House of Peers. Before the announcement could appear in the Gazette, Lord Goderich resigned. He, however, officially informed me that the King had signified his pleasure that all the peerages to which his Majesty had given his consent should be completed, notwithstanding the change of Administration. I then asked Lord Goderich whether the Duke of Wellington, who was then occupied in forming a Government, was in any way responsible for or concerned in this arrangement—as, if he was, I should even at that late period decline accepting the peerage. Lord Goderich distinctly and positively assured me to the contrary. Upon that assurance I acted, and have never considered myself under the slightest degree of obligation to the noble Duke with reference to a transaction in which he was in no degree concerned, and which he neither advised nor could have prevented. In fact, the Duke of Wellington was not gazetted First Lord of the Treasury until January 25—a week after my peerage appeared in the Gazette.'

This statement was drawn from Lord Durham by the insinuation, publicly expressed, that he owed his seat in the House of Lords to the Duke of Wellington, a statesman with whom he had nothing in common, and to whom, as a matter of fact, he

was always opposed. Many letters of congratulation reached Lord Durham—not a few of them still exist among his papers—but the one which perhaps gratified him most was from Sir William Dalrymple, who was then a nonagenarian. He had been a friend, in far-off years, of Durham's grandfather, General Lambton, who had told him that elections in the county of Durham had cost his family upwards of 100,000*l*. Sir William had also expressed the opinion, when Lord Rockingham's Ministry succeeded to that of Lord North, that the services of the Lambtons should be rewarded with a peerage. 'It therefore affords me,' added Sir William, 'the most heartfelt satisfaction that I should have lived to the ninety-second year of my age to behold General Lambton's wishes realised in your Lordship's person. I most truly hope that you may live long in the full enjoyment of it, in health, happiness, and prosperity.' Fifteen years of hard work in the House of Commons, spent in the cold shade of opposition, was in itself a political education for the great tasks of administration which awaited Lord Durham, when he stepped, at the age of thirty-six, into a position which was destined to make peculiar demands upon him, and to call forth all his powers.

Durham, from early manhood to the close of his strenuous, troubled life, enjoyed the gladness and peace of singularly happy surroundings in his own home. No man was ever more dependent on affection or more sensitively responsive to it. His wife's devotion never wavered, though there were times when her husband's misunderstandings with Lord Grey rendered her position extremely difficult; but 'Lambton,' as she always called him, was ever a hero in her eyes, and she did all that was possible to a quick-witted chivalrous woman, not merely to shield him from passing annoyance—seldom an easy task—but to give him under

his own roof the rest and the gladness, which meant newness of life to a man of his easily depressed and sensitive temperament.

Sometimes in his public speeches, especially when he unburdened himself amongst his own people in the north of England, Lord Durham would make passing allusions to his 'home,' his 'dear fireside' and the 'affectionate welcome' of those whom he loved, and whenever he did so his mellow, beautiful voice would soften with palpable but restrained emotion, whilst an expression of tenderness stole over a face, which always reflected with absolute truthfulness, as in a mirror, whatever might be the mood of the moment. His children adored him, and he, for his part, quickly grew restless and unhappy if they were not within call. During the busiest and most critical years, when in the thick of political affairs, he would sit down to write to one or other of them long after midnight, rather than disappoint an ardent little correspondent of an eagerly expected letter. His sojourns in Italy, Russia, Canada, would have been impossible if his children had not shared the exile from England, and nothing which could heighten their innocent gaiety or quicken their intelligence was forgotten.

Durham had many detractors. He was too fearless, too independent, too outspoken a man to escape obloquy, but nothing was more ridiculously wide of the truth than the assertion that his temperament was gloomy and his humour sardonic. Like everyone of finely poised temperament, he was easily depressed and quickly elated, and at all times his nerves were easily jarred, and his temper, which was quick though generous, was suddenly provoked. But when so much is allowed, the fact remains that he had the art of turning chance acquaintances into steadfast friends, and the secret of it was the magic of sympathy. Misfortune or

pain of any kind made a resistless appeal to him, and if he believed a man was slandered or wronged, he came to his aid in defiance of public opinion.

Anything more simple or attractive than Durham's letters to his eldest boy, Charles William Lambton, between the years 1828 and 1830, it would be difficult to imagine. Few more beautiful children have ever gladdened an English home than 'handsome Charlie,' as Prince Leopold—afterwards King of the Belgians—always called the child, who has been immortalised in art in Sir Thomas Lawrence's exquisite picture of 'Master Lambton.' He died at Brighton on September 24, 1831, in his fourteenth year, and it seemed as if the light of Durham's life had gone out with the loss of a boy of such rare promise. Lawrence painted Master Lambton in 1827, and the work has ever since been regarded as one of the most natural and life-like pictures of a child. In a note to her husband, written at that period, Lady Durham says: 'I am just returned with Charles from his sitting. Sir Thomas has drawn in the figure very carefully, and is to have a very long sitting the next time. I think the picture will be perfectly delightful, and I don't see how anything can look better than the dress.' Master Lambton in reality, as well as in art, was a bewitching boy. Lord Durham, though keenly interested in the progress of the work, was apparently content to wait until Lawrence had put the finishing touch to the picture. When he saw it in the artist's studio he was spell-bound, and could only exclaim 'Most beautiful!' A verdict which all the world has since endorsed.

His town house at this period was 13 Cleveland Row, and it was there that the discussions of the Committee of Four took place a few years later, when the draft of the First Reform Bill was in preparation. Meanwhile Durham no sooner saw the picture

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Sir Thomas Lawrence, pinx.

Walker Boddington Sc.

"Master Lambton"

Charles, eldest son of Lord Durham.

than he made haste to get it to Cleveland Row. 'Did I tell you,' he writes to his wife on July 10, 'that I have got Charles's picture home? It is over the chimney-piece in my bedroom. I therefore see his angelic face the last thing before I go to sleep and the first when I awake.' A year later Sir Thomas Lawrence painted his scarcely less famous portrait of Lord Durham. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1829, and engraved by C. Turner, A.R.A., in 1831. Lawrence regarded it as one of the most successful of his portraits, and his judgment was endorsed by Durham's most intimate friends, who, without exception, described it as a speaking likeness.

There are many childish notes in existence which reveal how deep and tender was the home-life at Lambton. Amongst the rest, a sheaf of merry letters which passed between Lord Durham and 'handsome Charlie' have happily been preserved. The child lavished all kinds of endearing epithets on his 'darling,' 'funny' papa, and 'carissimo padre,' and sends him 'thousands of kisses,' which are repaid by return of post with compound interest. In the autumn of 1828 Durham was at Heaton Park, near Manchester, and at Chatsworth, and on September 22 he wrote from the former place as follows:—

Heaton Park, Manchester.

'My darling boy,—I wish you had been with me to-day. You would have been very much amused. I went to see the Cotton Manufactories. In one, twelve hundred men and women were employed, and the machinery in all was quite surprising, doing everything with ten times the speed and exactitude of men. I shall bring you a pattern of one of the cards (as they are called) done by machinery, which will surprise you. I am glad your kite has succeeded so well.

Who made it for you? Pray shake Poll[1] by the nose for me. Goodbye, my dearest.

Ever your affectionate,

'D.'

A little later he wrote again:

'Chatsworth: Saturday, October 18, 1828.

'My dearest Charles,—There are the most beautiful fountains here that I ever saw in England. The water rises a great height and is almost lost in spray. When the sun shines on it, it has a beautiful effect. One in particular, that is seen from the drawing-room window and is placed in a dark grove, puts me very much in mind of the German story of "Undine." Did you ever hear it? If not, ask mamma to tell it you. It is about a water sprite. The country is very fine, very high hills with great masses of wood and moors. Some day or other, I will take you into Derbyshire to see the "Wonders of the Peak." Goodbye, my love, I hope to see you on Monday.

'Ever yours most affectionately,

'D.'

'Master Lambton' was a bit of a wag. In one of his letters he was evidently sore let and hindered because his sisters were dancing a quadrille—'The most confused thing I ever saw.' Presently he adds, 'They are now trying their luck at a second—Emily with the most graceful gesticulations possible.' He winds up by wishing his father 'pleasant dreams of home.' In another note he thanks his father for writing to him 'as late as half-past twelve at night,' and adds 'I went out hunting yesterday with Uncle Ralph. We went all over the Park, but I suppose the foxes had heard the news that we were going out hunting, and so

[1] A pet parrot to which there are other amusing allusions.

kept out of our way all day. Was not that provoking? I went this afternoon to Whitehill with mamma to see Miss Cookson, who luckily was not at home.'

In another lively epistle the boy hopes that his father will like his sister's letter, since she has been composing it all day. He adds 'Mamma has almost finished reading "Guy Mannering" to us. I like it so much. My favourite is Colonel Mannering. Mamma's is Dandy Dinmont. Whose is yours? Best love and kisses. Goodbye.' In another he describes a day devoted to seeing what he calls the 'curiosities' of Durham. He was entertained at the house of Count Bonomi—the architect and designer of Lambton Castle—who regaled him with biscuits and a 'sort of porter called brown stout.' After paying a visit to another local notability: 'We marched ourselves off to the Cathedral, which, by the way, Mr. Bonomi told us, was always called by the common people the Abbey. I thought it quite beautiful. We heard the organ play and the choir chant the evening service. We then saw the Galilee and afterwards went up to the highest tower. I counted the steps, they were 320. When we had seen the Cathedral we went to see the tread-mill and jail. We all got upon the tread-mill for a short time. It was horrible. Mr. Hamilton (the tutor) says that he thinks it is torture established by law. We then went to the jail, where we saw two such fat men. One had been imprisoned for debt and for having assaulted the governor, and he was taking hold of the bars as if he could have torn them all up. They said he had been there for seven years. The other, called Blackett, had been there for nineteen years for some suit or other in Chancery. Those two were in the Court. We did not want to go through all the prison. After this we returned to Elvet Hill, and then rode off home. When we came to Chester-le-Street, the people cried out

"Lord Durham! Lord Durham for ever!" We arrived at Lambton at about ten minutes past seven. Had not we a nice day of it? I wish you had been with us. Goodbye, my dear papa.

'Your affectionate son,

'C. H. L.'

The child was living in wonderland, and scribbles to his father about 'The Vicar of Wakefield' and 'The Arabian Nights.' But he does not forget to tell him that Mr. Hamilton has admonished him over his lessons. In one letter Lord Durham does the same, gently reminding the little lad that he is now 'half past ten,' and must take more pains with his writing. He also, in congratulating him on his strange adventures in Durham, slyly adds that he thinks the 'brown stout was rather a hazardous experiment.' But the note does not end without the wish that Charlie was at his side, and it closes in the familiar key, 'Adieu, my darling boy, yours ever most affectionately.'

But enough of these artless letters—with one exception. 'Master Lambton' had written in great glee to tell his father of his powers with a gun. He had brought down a lark in the park. There came back, pell-mell, the following reply to that important announcement:—

'Heaton Park: Saturday night.

'My dearest Charles,—I am in a state of mingled astonishment and delight. Only think of your having killed a lark! *But* was it sitting, flying, or hopping? Do tell me all the particulars of so interesting an event. I hear from your mamma that its head was nearly blown off. Did it sit still whilst you fired into its ear, or how was the murderous deed accomplished? I hope I shall find you so improved when I return that I shall

get a dish of at least a dozen for dinner. By the way, I cannot say that your handwriting is improved.

'Ever most affectionately,

'D.

'Kiss George a 1000000000000 times.'

The child alluded to in the postscript was 'Master Lambton's' younger brother, George Frederick D'Arcy, who, whilst still a mere lad, succeeded to the earldom which was conferred on Lord Durham in 1833.

Lady Durham, in one of her letters, written to her husband at this period, says:—'I have a speech to tell you to-day of Charles's which I think will amuse you. The children were all talking last night at my dinner, and Fanny was saying that, when the history of England came "to be written a hundred years hence, your name would perhaps be mentioned in it." Upon which Charles said "I hope they will put it 'In the Reign of George the Fourth lived the famous Mr. Lambton—he was a man of considerable talents.'" I laughed, as you may suppose, not only at the sentence, but at the winning manner in which it came out.'

CHAPTER VIII

THE WELLINGTON MINISTRY

I always go on repeating until I find what I have been saying coming back to me in echoes from the people.—Daniel O'Connell.

1828–1830

Stockmar on the new Prime Minister—Wellington's confession—Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts—Catholic Emancipation—Lord Durham on the Catholic question—Bribery and corruption at Retford and Penryn—The Greek question and Prince Leopold's candidature for the throne—Leopold's friendship with Durham—Last days of George IV.—Political sympathies of William IV.—Agitation for Reform—Durham on the Wellington Government—Lord Grey's Ministry—Durham restates his views on Reform.

It was an odd turn of the wheel which brought Wellington to power, surrounded by all the prestige of his military triumphs. His remarkable personal ascendency was due, not merely to his services with the sword, but to the claims of high character, and they made him for a time, what Durham called him, a veritable Dictator. As a soldier, Wellington was without a rival, but as a statesman he cut a poor figure. He flouted the popular demand for Reform, and was stubborn in the defence of acknowledged notorious grievances. No one better exemplified the truth of the old saying—one man is not fit for everything. Baron Stockmar, who watched Wellington closely at that crisis, thought him one of the least adroit and most mischievous Ministers that England ever possessed. He said that his manner of conducting business shook the confidence of everyone, and that the result of his measures was that everything he did not intend was brought about.

'With a rare *naïveté*, Wellington confessed publicly and without hesitation the mistaken conclusions he had come to in the weightiest affairs of State—mistakes which the commonest understanding could have discovered, and which filled the impartial with astonishment, and caused terror and consternation even among the host of his flatterers and partisans.'

It was well for the English Throne that a Minister of the resolution and coolness of the Duke of Wellington was in power during the weakest, most indolent, and yet most headstrong and arbitrary period of the King's reign. George IV., storm and rave as he might, met his master in Wellington, and was saved from the folly of extremes which threatened the existence of the monarchy It almost seems as if the King, when Canning's sudden death came as a relief to his mind, though it placed him in perplexity, was afraid at the moment to summon Wellington, who, whatever else he might be, was a man of iron will. Anyhow, Goderich's appointment startled all parties, and his fall in a few months took no one by surprise.

The Goderich Ministry has the unique distinction of being the only one, at all events in modern times, which never had to face the fire of debate in the House of Commons. They came into power in August 1827, when Parliament had risen, and they died, because they had no inclination to live, in the following December. Lord Durham viewed the change of Government as an opportunity for the re-union of the Whigs, and, by this means, rendering the party more effective in its opposition to Tory tactics. 'Let us take advantage of this happy opportunity,' he wrote in a letter to Grey, 'to be united once more—firmly and upon some well understood and defined basis—not left as before to all the chances of the moment. If this cannot be effected, I, for one, shall give up political life altogether, for it is

not worth while to sit to be shot at without any chance of returning the fire. Don't be angry with me if I say that much of this may be traced to your having, some years ago, declared your intention of giving up your political lead.' Durham, in the same strain, continued to urge a re-union, but without effect. He was convinced that such a united party, with Grey as its recognised head, should be ready at any moment to form a Government, if called upon to do so. But this opinion was not shared by Grey himself. Both the Duke of Wellington and Peel had stood aloof from Canning's Ministry; in fact they had distrusted such a union of opposites, hardly less utterly than their great rival Lord Grey. The Goderich Cabinet was purely a makeshift.

Still, Wellington was probably the only man in the first rank of affairs to whom the King just then was prepared to listen, and it must always stand to his credit that, so far as that was possible, he brought George IV. to reason. Perhaps his solitary claim to political regard is that he eventually extorted a reluctant consent from the King for Catholic Emancipation—a concession which lost all its grace because it was the outcome of panic, and could no longer be refused without peril. Wellington was in power from January 26, 1828, until November 17, 1830, and in the interval two great measures of Reform became law—the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and the Bill which brought about Catholic Emancipation. Lord John Russell's challenge to the Nonconformists, who quickly rallied in their strength, was the immediate cause of the former, and Daniel O'Connell's election for Clare in 1828, involving as it did the defeat of a Cabinet Minister, rendered the latter inevitable.

Behind the electors of Clare stood three-fourths of the Irish people, and even Wellington was at last con-

vinced that further opposition was impossible. It is interesting to recall the fact that O'Connell won his title of 'Liberator' because he was the first Roman Catholic to force his way into the House of Commons since the reign of James II.

The struggle for religious equality in England, which Russell led, had enlisted the genius of Charles James Fox, but for nearly forty years the question of the Repeal of the Test Acts had been shirked, so far as the House of Commons was concerned. The Wellington Ministry opposed, though in a half-hearted way, Russell's motion, but it was carried by a majority of 44 votes. As for Catholic Emancipation, it became law only after a protracted and bitter struggle, which brought Ireland to the brink of rebellion.

Durham was on the side of religious no less than of civil liberty. He felt from the outset, however protracted the struggle, or violent the opposition, the demands of reason and justice must prevail. He declared that the Church of England, in spite of some defects which might easily be remedied, was one of the best and purest forms of religion, and that, therefore, it ought to fear no rivalry. On the contrary it ought, to borrow his own words, to 'demand—not avoid—a clear stage and no favour.' He held that if the Church of England was afraid to trust the people, it could not stand. 'The possession of exclusive privileges has deeply injured the Church of England, for they have been a sufficient substitute for personal exertions. The members of it, rich in worldly goods, high in temporal power, have too long abandoned the lowly habits of spiritual labour to those who, unseen by them, have been diligently sowing the seeds, the harvest of which not all the power of Parliament can prevent the reaping.' He protested against the assertion, which was common at the moment, that justice to the Noncon-

formists—using that term in its broadest sense—was incompatible with the existence of the Established Church. Compliance, not resistance, in his view, ought to be the watchword of the hour.

The Duke of Wellington, though he had taken up an untenable position over Catholic Emancipation, tenaciously held his ground until the movement grew resistless, if other and more vital interests were to be maintained. The Catholic Association had done its work so well that seven millions of people lay behind its demands, to say nothing of the sentiments of justice and fair play evoked on this side of the Irish Channel. Next to O'Connell, a leader of splendid eloquence and audacity, perhaps the greatest advocate of the Catholic claims was Sheil. When the struggle was at its height, he it was who publicly told Wellington that there were three counsellors whom it behoved him to consult at such a crisis, since they were better advisers than any to be found in his own Cabinet: 'The first is Justice; and Justice will tell you, you are bound to grant Catholic Emancipation. The next is Expediency; and Expediency will tell you, you ought to grant Catholic Emancipation. The last and chief is Necessity; and Necessity will tell you that you must emancipate the Catholics of Ireland.'

The final stand against such a concession was not made in the Cabinet but in the Court. Pitt at the beginning of the century, wishful to reconcile the Irish people to the Act of Union, was prepared to bring forward a measure to enable Catholics to sit in Parliament; but the project was wrecked by the attitude of George III. And now George IV., supported by a large majority of the Lords, spiritual and temporal, threatened to defeat the Catholic Relief Bill, introduced by Peel. But there was a difference between the two monarchs, and Lord John Russell summed it up in

the significant statement that George III.'s religious scruples were respected by the nation, whereas those of George IV. 'did not meet with ready belief, nor did his personal dislikes inspire national respect.'

In the summer of 1828, bets were made in political circles that the Catholics would sit in Parliament next year, for everybody felt that old Lord Eldon was right in his confident belief that, now the Dissenters had got their way, the Catholics would soon follow through the gap in the hedge. But the King was obdurate, and treated every mention of the subject as a personal affront. For weeks together his health was so bad, or his temper so violent, that even Wellington, who never minced words, was forced to drop the subject. But during all that anxious period the ascendency of the stronger nature, in spite of petulant outbursts, grew more marked.

Lord Durham, writing to Prince Leopold on November 3, 1828, indicated the position which the subject had assumed, and his own views on the prospect of a settlement. 'With reference to this particular subject—the Catholic Question—I am of opinion that any Government might carry it to a successful termination if it was once known that they were in earnest. But hitherto each administration has found it more convenient, looking to the state of parties, to place it in abeyance, and to shelter themselves under the notion that the English people are not sufficiently enlightened either to bear it, or even desire it. Besides, there is a strong party who are kept together solely by the watchword of "No Popery." By means of that cry they come into office; by means of it they hang together, and enjoy the monopoly of Patronage and Power. Once destroy that link, and they fall to pieces; the exclusive principle will be done away with, and the Crown will have the opportunity of choosing its servants from

amongst the most talented and influential of the land. At present it cannot, and is forced to look to the anti-Catholic party alone, a system which, your Royal Highness will easily perceive, works ill for the country and for the Sovereign, but well for that small knot of persons amongst whose ranks. destitute as they are of talent and intelligence, the rulers of this mighty empire are recruited. Hence arises all their virulence and inflammatory proceedings. I verily believe that if they could be ensured the same permanence in power that they have enjoyed since 1806, they would go farther than the Liberals in their concessions to the Catholics. Limited as their faculties are, I am convinced that they do not really apprehend that they would be burnt alive, as in the days of Mary, or that their properties would be affected by the concession of the Catholic Question. But they have the instinct to know—and they are right—that that event would prove a death-blow to the party, and, therefore, to their influence. Whether the Duke of Wellington will have the sense to see this and the courage to act upon it, I cannot give a decided opinion. Yet I think he will, for he ought to see that the present state of things leaves him at the mercy of this faction, and exposed to a strong, vigorous, and increasing opposition in Parliament; whereas the settlement of the Catholic Question would place him at the head of all the intelligence of the nation, and ensure him the quiet as well as the permanent enjoyment of his situation. At all events, as your Royal Highness well observes, the next session cannot fail to be a most interesting one, and other circumstances also contribute to render this a most important crisis. From the best information I can collect, both the King and the Duke of Clarence are in a most precarious state. As is usual, the greatest mystery is preserved as to his Majesty's health, but enough has transpired to make one believe

that the most alarming symptoms have appeared. . . . In this situation it must be most difficult for the Duke to approach his Majesty with any great and important proposition, especially one at variance with his own prejudices. It is most probable, therefore, that the evil day will be put off as long as possible. . . . This is my candid and sincere view of the state of things here. In expressing it, your Royal Highness will do me the justice to believe that I have but one object—that of seeing my country happy, and free from internal dissensions.'

In March, 1829, when the question of Catholic Relief in its final stage was before the House of Commons, the Duke of Cumberland played upon the prejudices of his brother so successfully, that the King worked himself into a state of frenzy, and was not brought again to reason until Wellington went down to Windsor and talked 'firmly and seriously' in an interview which was prolonged to six hours. In the end Lord Clarendon's prediction was fulfilled, for the King's friends in the gilded chamber gave way, and a Bill, which averted the risk of civil war in Ireland, became law on April 13.

Lord Clarendon had said that the Duke, when the final stage of the struggle had been reached, would call out, '"My Lords, Attention. Right about face. Quick march"—and the thing will be done,' and that, in substance, was what happened. But it has been well said that the concession of this measure of toleration and justice came too late. The Irish for the lifetime of a generation had seen their hopes baffled, and their rights denied. They felt no gratitude, because the measure was accompanied by a fresh act of injustice, in the shape of partial disfranchisement, and had only been granted when agitation had arisen to a menacing height, as the outcome of panic. Agitation in Ireland was to assume other forms, but the Catholic Relief Act,

with all its shortcomings, was still the beginning of a new and better era in that country.

Meanwhile the question of Reform was coming steadily to the front, in spite of the hostility of the Wellington Cabinet, and every day it became more apparent that the Government was a house divided against itself. The repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, which Lord John Russell carried in 1828, gave a fresh impetus to the movement. Scarcely was that question settled when flagrant cases of bribery at East Retford and Penryn—two notoriously corrupt boroughs—came before the House, and it was proposed to disfranchise the former in favour of Birmingham. Lord Durham opposed the measure on the ground that no bribery had been actually proved, and therefore it was wrong to punish the present electors for the misdoings of earlier generations. He contended that it was idle to make a scapegoat of one small borough, if Parliament was not prepared to deal out the same justice to ninety-nine other towns which were in the same case.

His own desire was for a general reform of all boroughs, and for an entire alteration of the representative system, and therefore he refused in the present instance to vote for depriving a small town of its political rights, when no notice was proposed to be taken of far more notorious evils elsewhere. He held that the proposal was neither more nor less than a Bill of pains and penalties; the question was a judicial one, and the House had to decide on the guilt or innocence of the accused. He reviewed the whole mass of evidence which had been brought forward, and summed up his own case as follows, 'In my conscience I must declare them absolved, because no bribery has been made out—because a minority only have been guilty of corruption, which is no legal offence—and because that corruption, amongst those few, began in 1812 and

ended in 1820, leaving the last election wholly and entirely untouched.'

The Government opposed the measure, and it was lost, but the victory was dearly bought, for Huskisson, who was Colonial Secretary, and, more than any other man, represented the views of Canning in the Cabinet, resigned, and was followed in that act by Lord Dudley, Lord Palmerston, and Charles Grant, who held the portfolios respectively of the Foreign Office, the War Office, and the Board of Trade. Lord Dalling, looking back on the situation which then arose, summed up the result in a sentence, 'The quarrel between the Duke of Wellington and Huskisson led to Grant being succeeded by FitzGerald at the Board of Trade—which led to the election for Clare—which led to Catholic Emancipation—which led, by a new defection in the Tory Party, to the Reform Bill—which led to a complete social and political revolution.'

In June 1829, Lord Blandford, a restless Tory, who had made himself conspicuous by his hostility to Catholic Relief, brought forward, to the surprise of everybody, a proposal for Parliamentary Reform. He was afraid lest the Roman Catholics, now that they were emancipated, would buy up the pocket boroughs in such numbers as to imperil the Protestant Constitution. No one took his newly found zeal seriously, and his efforts were about as successful as the attempt to fire a damp squib. Lord John Russell early in 1830 brought before Parliament a proposal to enfranchise Manchester, Birmingham, and Leeds, and urged that they were the three largest unrepresented towns in the country. But, though more enthusiasm was stirred by this scheme, it was rejected by a majority of forty-eight. Three months later O'Connell brought forward the much more drastic proposal of Universal Suffrage; but less than a score of members were in favour of it,

whilst an amendment by Lord John, which merely affirmed that it was 'expedient to extend the basis of the representation of the people,' was also rejected by a sweeping majority. Such was the position in which the question of Reform stood when, a few weeks later, June 26, 1830, George IV. died, and Parliament was dissolved.

Foreign politics in the last year of George IV.'s reign were chiefly concerned with the settlement of the Greek Question. Early in 1828, Palmerston, who was still a member of the Wellington Cabinet, saw clearly that Metternich was quite alive to the new situation created by the Battle of Navarino, and was assuming a new attitude. Metternich exclaimed, on reading the news of the battle, 'Navarino has begun a new era for Europe.' Palmerston put the matter bluntly when he declared that Metternich, having discovered that he could not prevent the Russian war and the liberation of Greece by virtue of the Treaty of London, was making a virtue of necessity by veering round, and endeavouring to outstep the Allies in the direction of concessions to patriotic sentiment. His motive, Palmerston thought, was obvious. He wished to lead the public opinion of Europe, and therefore made haste to declare that the time had come when Greece should be rendered independent of Turkey.

The history of the political negotiations which immediately followed is outside the province of this narrative; it is enough to say that the complete independence of Greece was settled, in March 1829, by England, France, and Russia in concert. So far as England was concerned, this meant a triumph of Canning's policy. Wellington was at first entirely opposed to the project. If the truth must be spoken, neither Wellington, who had his mortal antipathies in foreign politics as well as on questions much nearer

home, nor Aberdeen, who was in many respects an exasperating, and always a hesitating statesman, shone in the diplomatic overtures which presently arose, when the question of a ruler for the new kingdom came up for discussion. Count Capodistrias was the first President of the Greek Government, but he was clearly impossible. He came to the front because he had helped to kindle the Greek revolt against Turkey, and he posed as a most ardent patriot. He called himself a Russian, 'but above all a Greek.' He had served with Nesselrode in the Russian Foreign Office, and was suspected, probably with a good deal of truth, of being a mere agent of the Tsar. It was therefore necessary to find a foreign prince—for Capodistrias had powerful rivals in Greece itself—to rule over the new kingdom, and the choice ultimately fell upon George IV.'s son-in-law, Prince Leopold, then a young widower, living at Claremont in the enjoyment of a big pension, but far too liberal in his sentiments to stand well at the English Court.

Prince Leopold had been approached as early as the year 1825 in regard to the Greek Crown, but Canning had discouraged the idea, on the ground that George IV.'s son-in-law could be more useful in England than in Greece, and that it was useless for him to entertain the notion without the consent of the Triple Alliance. All difficulties seemed removed in 1829, when England, Russia, and France were of one mind about the Prince's election. In England, where the Prince was popular, opinion was strongly in his favour, but George IV. was hotly opposed to the proposal, and, as a matter of fact, only consented when the Duke of Wellington threatened to resign. The King, even then, only gave way on the understanding that the Prince should relinquish his pension.

Count Capodistrias professed to be extremely anxious

that Prince Leopold should accept the throne, but at the same time wrote to him again and again, giving a sinister and, indeed, alarmist view of the difficulties which were likely to arise if he became king. It seems tolerably clear that Capodistrias was in reality playing for his own hand, for he was as ambitious as he was plausible. The Princess Lieven told Lord Grey who was opposed to Prince Leopold's candidature, that Capodistrias was not only a most patriotic Greek but a most honest man—a statement which there now seems good reason to doubt. He certainly had the art of rendering himself impressive to even the most unlikely persons. Prince Metternich, who was a shrewd judge of men, went so far as to assert that if Leopold was elected King of Greece, he would straightway make Capodistrias his Prime Minister. In the end, though that is to anticipate, Capodistrias was unpopular with his own countrymen, and was assassinated in 1831.

Lord Grey, with whom Prince Leopold had much more in common than with the Duke of Wellington or Lord Aberdeen, did not conceal his impatience with the negotiations. He thought Prince Leopold must have a great desire to figure as a monarch, and very little regard for his own happiness or safety, to dream of accepting such a position. The Princess Lieven, on the other hand, protested against the notion that it was a case of acceptance at all. She maintained that the Prince coveted the crown, and had intrigued for its possession. She told Grey that she had made a bet with her husband two years previously, that Leopold, whom she described as the 'craftiest of men,' was working to get Greece, and she even hinted that she had at that time, to borrow her own words, 'wormed such a confession out of him.' Grey stuck to his opinion about the Prince's folly in wishing for such a situation, shrugged his shoulders, and declared there

was no accounting for tastes. Lord Aberdeen represented the Wellington Cabinet in the affair, and Prince Leopold found him an exacting diplomatist.

Baron Stockmar held that the Prince should never negotiate in his own person, but always by means of a plenipotentiary, whom, if it came to the worst, he could disallow. But Prince Leopold allowed himself to be entangled in a long correspondence, which, as he afterwards confessed, chilled the soul within him, and had the further disadvantage of leading to grave misunderstandings. It was at this stage that the Prince appealed to Lord Durham, as one of his oldest and most intimate friends in English political life. He assured Durham of his high appreciation of his friendship and kindness, and expressed the hope that they would be continued as long as he lived. He spoke of the worry through which he was passing, and of his need of the advice of a friend on whom he could rely, a hint which brought Durham at once to his side. Prince Leopold's great mistake was that he accepted the Crown—a fact which was at once bruited abroad—and then raised difficulties which Lord Aberdeen somewhat brusquely refused to entertain.

Writing to Lord Grey on January 30, Durham asked, 'Is it quite settled that Leopold is to be King, or Sovereign, of Greece? If so, I think I shall take the opportunity of emigrating with him—if he will give me a forfeited Turkish principality, and leave taxes, tithes, and troubles of all kinds behind to "them as like 'em," as old Sir W. Curtis would say.' He added, in a more serious strain, 'I cannot conceive Leopold's wishing the thing; he has no activity of mind or energy sufficient for the ruler of such a lawless set of pirates. He has very good sound sense, and is well informed, and would make a very good King for England, but not for a country like Greece.'

The Wellington Cabinet, of which Aberdeen was the spokesman, had so far been complaisant and yielding, but now its mood changed, until the Prince was confronted with unconditional surrender. He wanted Crete to be included in the new kingdom, a demand in which he was strongly backed by Lord Durham, who also had much to do with the question, which the Prince made a *sine quâ non*, that the frontier lines of the new kingdom should consist of a line from the Gulf of Volo to the Gulf of Arta, instead of the much more contracted territory which the Triple Alliance proposed. Prince Leopold protested against the Conference determining a line of frontier in a country like Greece merely, as he put it, 'by pegs and painted sticks' rather than by the mountains which were the natural boundaries. He attempted to secure, in this and in other directions, reasonable terms for the Greeks, but Lord Aberdeen was obdurate. 'The Powers have no intention whatever,' were his words, 'of negotiating with your Royal Highness. They expect a simple acceptance of their proposal, and would consider a conditional acceptance as a virtual refusal.' The result was that, on May 21, Leopold definitely declined the sovereignty of Greece. 'Samuel Rogers told me,' says Lord Broughton, 'Lord Aberdeen was exceedingly annoyed at Prince Leopold's refusal of the crown of Greece. Rogers asked him if he did not think the letter well written. "Damnably well," replied Aberdeen. And he then talked of the probable author—Lord Grey, or Lambton, or Huskisson. I dined at Lord Durham's on June 6, and he told me that he was the writer of Prince Leopold's resignation.' In less than a year, commissioners, who had been sent by the Powers to Greece to investigate the boundary question on the spot, justified the Prince's scruples by reporting that the line from Volo to Arta was the only possible frontier, and it was accordingly adopted.

Destiny, meanwhile, had appointed another sphere for Prince Leopold.

For the last two years of his life George IV. had been little in the public view. He lived in almost Oriental seclusion, and seldom left Windsor. His repugnance to the public curiosity—it could scarcely be called homage—grew more and more pronounced. During the final months of his life, his Majesty, when he took his drives through the Park, had sentinels placed to ward off all spectators. The gloom of his closing days was intensified by his repugnance to Catholic Emancipation, his dislike of what he persisted in regarding as the pretensions of Prince Leopold to the throne of Greece, and above all by his growing infirmities. He suffered from sleeplessness, great depression of spirits, oppressed breathing, frequent attacks of gout, and, although there were some illusions which he cherished to the last, he was perfectly well aware that, whatever his courtiers might say, the nation would not lament his departure. About April his condition grew so deplorable that it was deemed necessary by Sir Henry Halford and Sir Matthew Tierney to issue bulletins. These announcements were, however, for several weeks both vague and guarded; it was afterwards said that the King insisted on reading them before they were published to the world. At one stage of his illness he was even declared convalescent, and the bulletins ceased by his own orders. He clung to life tenaciously, though it was apparent to everyone that, at the best, it had little to offer him. Then, as his strength waned, the intercepted messages were resumed, and, though still guarded, grew more and more ominous. Death came with sudden mercifulness at three o'clock on the morning of June 26, and Lady Conyngham abruptly took her departure, with jewels, which she was afterwards forced to surrender. The announcement

of the King's death was quietly received. The nation had small difficulty in bowing to the decrees of Providence.

The Duke of Clarence was sixty-five when he ascended the throne as William IV. He had spent the best years of his life in as much obscurity as was possible to a son of George III. He had no son who could succeed him, though his short reign was harassed not a little by the importunate demands of his numerous illegitimate children. He was inclined to the Whigs, and never forgot that Canning had given him, at a time when he was a negligible quantity at Court, a place in his Cabinet; but for the moment he was not prepared to quarrel with the Duke of Wellington, whom in a public speech, almost immediately after his accession, he extolled to the skies in an elaborate comparison with Marlborough. He cherished the idea that Lord Grey might be induced to join forces with the Prime Minister, little realising how wide was the political divergence between the two statesmen. Wellington was anxious to secure both Melbourne and Palmerston, and approached them with that object in view, but he made no secret that Grey was impossible, nor did the latter in the least countenance the idea of such a union of forces.

William IV., though a man of small intellectual endowments, was in every respect a vast improvement on his brother, the late king. He was free from the egregious vanity, prodigality, selfishness and suspicion which made George IV. obnoxious to the English people, and, jealous though he was of the Royal prerogatives, he was not, as events proved, unamenable to reason. He was curiously unversed in politics, and was not a good judge of men. His sympathies in early life were with the Whigs, but when he came to the throne he made no attempt to conceal his satisfaction

that the Tories were in power. Yet when the demand for Reform brought the Whigs to power, after a short interval, William IV. accepted the inevitable, though not with the best grace. Still, even the Radicals of that epoch admitted that the King had the merit of always acting openly and fairly towards his Ministers. It was said he would have changed them if he could; he never pretended that they were men after his heart; he made no secret that they had been forced upon him by the popular demand. But, in spite of his strong objection to some of their proposals, he acted with good faith, and left them—except at one memorable crisis—no ground for complaint.

William IV., under no conceivable circumstances, had the making of a great king, for he took short views to a deplorable extent, had many prejudices, little tact, and much obstinacy; but that he was honestly disposed to do his best is not open to question, and during the struggle for Reform he undoubtedly played a great and patriotic part. After the passage of that measure, however, he grew apprehensive and uneasy, and was alarmed at the political and social consequences to which it inevitably led. It is only fair to recall, in passing, the circumstances of his life, for they must be taken into account, because, to a large extent, they determined his outlook on politics. He entered the Navy as a boy of thirteen, saw active service under Rodney, swore eternal friendship with Nelson, developed into a bluff, good-natured, brave, and careless sailor, and had no notion that he would ever be called to the throne until he was upwards of sixty, when the death of the Duke of York in 1827 made him Heir-Apparent. He was credited with being a good friend and an equally good hater, and when he became King his easy manners, contempt for ceremony, and boisterous sailor-like greetings to his friends in the street were in such

vivid contrast with the petulant air, morbid pride, and secluded habits of George IV. that, whilst sticklers for etiquette were not a little ruffled, the people were delighted.

The reign of William IV. began under disquieting conditions, both at home and abroad, and the King required all his courage to confront the situation. The poverty of the people was deplorable, trade was declining, the workhouses were filled to overflowing, rick-burning was common, and the operatives in the towns were restless and half-starved, whilst children of ten years of age were working in the factories, under dismal and unsanitary conditions, for thirteen and even fourteen hours a day, and the poor-rate stood at ten shillings and ninepence per head of the population. But the spirit of progress was abroad, for, to cite but two examples, in the year of William IV.'s accession, the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was opened, and the Birmingham Political Union was already at work. The first meant the beginning of a great industrial revolution, and the second the bringing of organised pressure from without on Parliament, for sweeping changes in the representation of the people.

All through the summer the agitation for Reform grew in intensity, as well as in volume, and it became plain, except to the most purblind statesmen, that Parliamentary Reform was swiftly coming within the range of practical politics. The Duke of Wellington, with the Tory party at his back, was, however, not of that opinion; but those who were more in touch with the people, and, therefore, better informed as to their determination, knew perfectly well that England stood on the verge of Reform or revolution. Lord Durham made no secret of his own convictions. A country can as effectually—perhaps more surely—be ruined by corrupt Parliaments, were his words, as by ambitious tyrants,

for, the forms of the Constitution being preserved while the essence is destroyed, the people are not upon their guard. He protested against the constant attempt of the Ministry to represent all who sought to expose official malpractices as disaffected to the Monarchy. If Parliaments are worth anything, he contended, they must be independent, since a dependent—nay, even a Parliament in leading strings—is only a licensed tyranny —an incumbrance rather than an advantage to the nation. The Revolution in France which ended in the flight of Charles X., and the revolt of Belgium against Holland, leading to its creation as an independent kingdom, were events which were hailed with outbursts of enthusiasm in England, and perceptibly quickened the demand for Reform. Restive and eager for the coming battle with privilege, Durham thought such tidings 'glorious,' and only wished that the English people possessed the same spirit.

'It never can be (he wrote) for the advantage of the King to continue a Government formed on the principle of that of the Duke of Wellington. All its force centres professedly in himself. No talent is suffered to exist there beyond a certain point—and that his own capacity. It is announced to be independent of all parties, but it is not so, for it is dependent on their decision, or rather their supposed repellent powers. No great and influential parties in the State are attached to it, such as have at former times stood by the Crown when its balance in the Constitution has been attacked. Nor is it the Duke's policy that these great interests should be connected with the Crown—for its weakness is also essential to the success of his principle of administration.

'With no real strength in Parliament, he is dependent on the popular cry of the moment for the carrying of all his measures, if indeed those legislative

caprices can be called measures which emanate from no fixed system, but spring from the exigency of one moment, and are either neutralised or revoked by the necessity of the next. In this worst state of dependence and uncertainty it naturally follows that, whenever an opportunity occurs to claim merit and seek a cheap favour in the estimation of the country, the Duke seizes on it with eagerness, in order to strengthen his hold on what he terms public opinion. Amongst the modes least affecting his own power and patronage is that of abandoning to public reprobation such points as regard either the expenditure or prerogative of the Crown. When these questions come before the House of Commons they are defended in a lukewarm manner, and given up on the first attack; thus, by one and the same act, increasing the weakness of the Crown and the strength of the Duke's claims on public opinion.

'This conduct may appear very meritorious and worthy of support in the eyes of those who would increase the weight of the popular branch of the Constitution, but to the possessors of the Royal power it must assume a very different and a very dangerous appearance. The force of that power exists not in one especial attribute, but in the concentration of many—the abandonment of any cannot be submitted to without producing, not only general weakness, but also a feeling in the public mind that if they can be safely dispensed with in some instances they may in others. Where is this to end? and who can say that the knife applied with a resolute hand for the purpose of taking off excrescences may not, either accidentally or designedly, pierce a vital part?

'To such means of resistance a strong Government, founded on the support of those whose interests are equally involved with those of the Sovereign, need not have recourse. Having a just confidence in their

Parliamentary strength, they can act on a fixed and well defined system, and be enabled both to gratify the people and protect the just rights of the Crown.

'At the commencement of a new reign many measures affecting the peculiar and personal interests of the Crown must be brought under the consideration of Parliament—the Civil List, and many other arrangements affecting the comfort and happiness of the Sovereign and his family. Can they—will they be brought to a satisfactory conclusion by a Government, founded and acting on the principle before mentioned? Is it not certain either that the Government will not have the power, from its Parliamentary weakness, or the inclination, from its principle of composition, to effect a settlement which would insure the strength and independence of the Crown?'

The first Parliament of the new reign assembled on October 26, 1830. As a result of the General Election in the summer, the party of progress, for the first time in forty years, was predominant in the House of Commons. Outside the pocket boroughs, the Ministerialists were defeated almost everywhere. Not a solitary member of the Duke of Wellington's Cabinet was returned in any quarter where there was a free and open election. In the debate upon the Address, Wellington was ill-advised enough to utter a few words, which, to borrow an historic phrase, raised a storm which swept away his Government, and well-nigh destroyed his party. Lord Grey took occasion to comment on the lack of any allusion in the King's Speech to the question which was uppermost in the mind of the nation. He expressed the hope that the Government would not postpone the consideration of Reform, as it had that of Catholic Emancipation, only to be compelled at last to yield to expediency what it had refused to concede upon principle. He said he had been a friend

of Reform during his whole political life, because he recognised it to be a measure which, if resisted, would one day lead to the destruction of the confidence of the people in their rulers, nay, perhaps to the destruction of the Constitution itself. He added in reference to external dangers, 'I do not look for defence to an increased Army and Navy; on the contrary, I am convinced that such precautions would bring upon us the very danger which we sought, by their adoption, to avoid.' It was hinted, he went on to say, by those who held opposite views to his own, that a great political storm was on the horizon. 'What then is to be done? Why, put your house in order and then the storm may drive over you without injury.' This could not be done, so ran his argument, by the mode proposed by the Government. 'It must be by securing the affections of the people, by removing their grievances, by affording redress; in short, it must be by Reform.'

Lord Grey at the moment had no thought of office. He made it plain that he was prepared to give an independent support to the Government if they would deal with the question of the political grievances of the people. He was not anxious for more than what he called temperate Reform; he even hinted that less would satisfy him now than when he advocated the question in former years, with what he called all the rashness of youth. Wellington, when he rose to reply, had a great opportunity. He might have dished the Whigs without making any approach to sweeping concessions, but he threw the chance away, ran up the 'No surrender' flag, and by nailing it to the mast spoilt all chance of ever dipping it again. The Duke stated that he was fully convinced that the country possessed at the present moment a Legislature which answered all the good purposes of legislation, and this to a greater degree than any scheme of government ever had answered them in

any country whatever. He contended that the House of Commons possessed the confidence of the country, nay, that it deserved their confidence, that its decisions justly possessed the greatest weight and influence with the nation. 'Nay, my Lords,' he added, 'I will go yet further, and say that if, at this moment, I had to form a Legislature for any country, particularly for one like this, in the possession of great property of various descriptions, although, perhaps, I should not form one precisely such as we have, I would endeavour to produce something which would give the same result, namely, a representation of the people containing a large body of the property of the country, and in which the great landed proprietors have a preponderating influence. In conclusion, I beg to state that not only is the Government not prepared to bring forward any measure of this description, but that, as far as I am concerned, whilst I have the honour to hold the situation I now do amongst his Majesty's Councillors, I shall always feel it my duty to oppose any such measures, when brought forward by others.'

So stout a defence of the existing system, linked, as it was, with the statement that the representation of the people was perfect, uttered at a moment when popular feeling already ran high, and discontent was universal, was regarded as singularly ill-advised, even on the Tory benches. When the Duke sat down, amid the real and scarcely suppressed excitement of his own supporters, he turned to one of his colleagues, and whispered, 'What can I have said that seems to have made so great a disturbance?' The noble lord at his side played the part of the candid friend, 'You have announced the fall of your Government, that is all.' The consternation in the House of Commons amongst Tories, who had faced the music of the General Election, was startling, especially when Brougham arose and

gave notice of his intention to bring forward in a fortnight the question of Parliamentary Reform. Before that fortnight elapsed the Government were defeated over the Civil List, and on the very day on which Brougham was to introduce the dreaded measure, November 16th, the Ministry resigned, and the King promptly sent for Lord Grey.

Sydney Smith, writing at the moment, summed up the situation. 'Never was any Administration so completely and so suddenly destroyed; and I believe entirely by the Duke's declaration, made, I suspect, in perfect ignorance of the state of public feeling.' The Duke always maintained that he did not resign on account of Parliamentary Reform, but because he had been left in a minority on the question of the Civil List. The latter was, of course, the ostensible cause of his downfall, but Brougham's instant response to his declaration on Reform was not less certainly the real difficulty which led him to take refuge in ignominious flight from an untenable position.

Grey, writing on November 16, thus describes his own summons to power: 'I received the letter from the King between three and four, requiring my attendance at St. James's. I went immediately, and have come away commissioned to form a new Administration. I feel appalled at the difficulties with which I am surrounded.' On November 19 all the appointments in the Cabinet were made, even those which concerned the delicate question of the Royal Household.

Durham's letters to his wife, who was then at Lambton, give a lively picture of the crisis. Early in November there were rumours that Wellington was likely to resign. But Durham held the contrary opinion. 'I think,' he wrote, 'he never will resign. He may be turned out, but he will never go voluntarily.' A few hours before the Ministry resigned he wrote, telling

Lady Durham that on the previous night, November 15, the Government had met with 'a good licking,' as Parnell's motion on the Civil List had been carried against them by a majority of twenty-nine. He had made a speech himself that night in the Lords, and had afterwards gone to a reception in Berkeley Square, when suddenly his brother-in-law, Lord Howick, and Sir Charles Wood rushed into the room, calling out in great excitement, 'We've beat them; they're done for,' not a little to the consternation and disgust of some Tories who were present.

After hearing about the debate, Durham went off to Brooks's, which he found in the 'greatest commotion and delight.' There he was told that the news had already been carried to Wellington, who remarked to the Whip who brought it, 'Ah, well—much obliged to you, the game's up. The Foreign Ministers are upstairs; I may as well be the first to tell them.' Durham added, 'I can hardly think it possible they will face the House of Commons to-night. But the Duke has obstinacy for anything. But I will write to you the last thing before the post goes out, in case there is anything new.' There was something new, as the following hasty note, scribbled that afternoon at half-past five, shows: 'The King has sent for Lord Grey. He says nothing could be more satisfactory than his conduct, and his Majesty has entrusted him with the formation of a new Administration.' Next morning Durham wrote, 'None of the plans are yet settled, but the King has given Lord Grey *carte-blanche*. The great difficulty I foresee will be with Brougham. He has frightened so many people (the King among the rest) by his wild speeches, that it is hard to place him in a situation which would please him and, at the same time, not offend others. Lord Anglesey is to be offered Ireland, and I sincerely hope he may accept it. Stanley will

probably be the Secretary under him. Lansdowne will, of course, take a place, and Lord Holland, if he thinks his health will suffer him, but he is now laid up by gout, as, indeed, he generally is eleven months out of twelve. You will ask, naturally, something of myself. Lord Grey asked me my views, which I explained in the same terms that I have often used before, and of which you are not ignorant. But I told him I would sacrifice all my own inclinations to assist him in the most arduous task which he has undertaken. Nothing yet has been arranged with regard to anyone except that Lord Grey feels he must take the Treasury as Prime Minister, which he doesn't like, as he would rather be at the Foreign Office.'

Later in the day he wrote again: 'All is going on well. Anglesey has agreed to go to Ireland, with Stanley as Secretary. The Duke of Richmond will have the Ordnance, Graham a seat in the Cabinet—office not yet named. I am to be in also. Lord Grey couldn't yet say what office. He thought perhaps Privy Seal. I would rather, of course, have had something to do, but I place myself entirely at his disposal. He is now—4 o'clock—with Lansdowne and Holland. I shall hear the result when I go to dinner. He is to be with the King at five. The Cabinet will soon be formed, and well, I trust.'

Next day, November 18, the process of Cabinet-making was so far advanced that he was able to write: 'I hope everything will be settled to-night. We are all to meet at Lansdowne House after dinner, when I think the list and places will be definitely arranged. I met Lord Errol and Frederick FitzClarence yesterday evening in St. James's Street. They told me that the King was delighted with Lord Grey and with all that had passed in their interviews. He goes again this evening at half-past five. I dine with him afterwards.

He is very well, but of course nervous, and sleeps little. That I don't wonder at, for I have not had many hours' sleep for the last three nights. When it is once arranged, this excitement will subside. I was with Anglesey to-day for a considerable time; he is highly pleased at going back to Ireland. I am very anxious to know when I shall have the pleasure of seeing you all. I am now going to the House to present some petitions on Slavery for Lord Grey.'

On the morrow, November 19, he wrote to announce that all Lord Grey's initial difficulties were at last settled, and to give Lady Durham a list of the Ministry. After giving the names, there is just a hint that he is a little disappointed with the post assigned to him, but he adds that, whilst he would have liked a more efficient office, he felt it was 'quite honour enough to belong to such a Cabinet.'

Canning's old lieutenants, Lord Palmerston, Lord Melbourne, and Lord Goderich, now threw in their lot definitely with the Whigs. Lord Lansdowne, who had been Lord Grey's colleague in Fox's far-off Ministry of All the Talents, also accepted office, greatly to the Prime Minister's satisfaction, and another member of that brilliant but short-lived Administration, in the person of Lord Holland, joined the new Cabinet. It was a curious circumstance that a Cabinet, which took office pledged to bring in a great democratic measure like Parliamentary Reform, should contain only two or three Commoners. Grey's difficulties at that crisis might not have been so quickly surmounted but for the allegiance of Lord Holland and the Marquis of Lansdowne, both of whom possessed great and justly acquired ascendency in the old Whig party. Their personal qualifications were not small, the former being the nephew of Fox, and the other the son of Shelburne, names to conjure with at such a crisis. Lord Grey's

Administration, as ultimately constructed, was remarkable in many respects, and not least in its representative character. Palmerston became Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Melbourne went to the Home Office, Althorp took up the burden of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Durham became Lord Privy Seal, Lansdowne accepted the post of President of the Council, and Holland that of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Amongst other members of the Ministry—some of them were not, however, in the Cabinet—were Lord John Russell, Lord Auckland, Lord Goderich, Mr. Charles Grant, Lord Duncannon, the Duke of Richmond, and the Marquis Wellesley, brother of the defeated Duke of Wellington.

Perhaps the chief surprise was the conferment of a peerage on Brougham, an elevation which was inevitable to the position of Lord Chancellor, though most reluctantly accepted. Brougham was at first offered the post of Attorney-General, an appointment which he curtly refused. Grey then proposed to make him Master of the Rolls, but, before bringing his name forward in that connection, consulted Lord Althorp. The latter predicted that the Ministry would not last three months if Brougham was left in the House of Commons in possession of an irremovable office. He added that if such a course was taken, he, for his part, would decline to join the Cabinet. This settled the matter, for Grey, who would much have preferred that Lord Althorp rather than himself should be Prime Minister, and was determined that Althorp must be Leader of the House of Commons, at once offered Brougham the post of Lord Chancellor, which, to the surprise of everybody who knew his political ambition, was grudgingly accepted.

Lord Durham gives a description, in one of his letters, of the scene when Brougham was installed in his exalted office. Writing to Lady Durham on No-

vember 25, he says: 'To-day, at one o'clock, we all went to attend the Lord Chancellor Brougham in the Court of Chancery, where he took his seat for the first time. There were present the Dukes of Sussex and Gloucester, Prince Leopold, almost all the Ministers, the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Wellesley, and a most numerous *cortège*. The Court of Chancery was crammed to a degree.'

Grey declared that in the formation of the Cabinet he had kept two things steadily in view. He wanted to show, in what he called 'these times of democracy,' that there was real capacity for the public service in the aristocracy, and that the best men in the nobility were in truth a pledge for the security alike of the State and of the Throne. He, further, had no wish, like his predecessor, to shine at the expense of his colleagues. 'My Cabinet,' he told the Princess Lieven, 'is composed of men who have all displayed high Parliamentary talents. I have chosen each of them with a view to the special aptitude for the post he occupies, and I leave to each full latitude to manage his department in accordance with his own judgment. The Dictatorship is abolished.'[1]

Lord Grey was depressed, rather than elated, at the sudden turn of affairs, which had placed him in the front of the battle. He was sixty-six, and he felt that in certain respects he was out of touch with the new spirit of the age. He did not relish the new conditions which had arisen through the alliance of many prominent Whigs with Canning, and he honestly felt that an honour, which he would have eagerly welcomed at an earlier stage of his career, had come to him too late, after years of political seclusion. Nothing in Lord Grey's character, however, was more impressive than his keen sense of public duty, and it was this more than

[1] *Letters of Princess Lieven*, 1812–1834, edited by Lionel G. Robinson.

anything else which led him to accept at such a crisis the responsibilities of a political leader. When quite a young man, he had predicted that, if the political disabilities of the people remained unredressed, the people, 'maddened by excessive injury and roused to a feeling of their own strength,' might make havoc of the existing order. He knew perfectly well that the condition of the country in 1830 was such that open lawlessness at any moment might no longer be the exception but the rule, and therefore, as a patriot, he determined, against his own inclinations, to pilot the nation through the storm.

Durham, more than any other member of the Administration, in spite of his imperious manners, and, at times, his dictatorial bearing, was the hope of the Radicals, and his presence in the Grey Administration was regarded as a pledge that no half-measures would be attempted on the coming question of Reform. Lord Durham made no secret of his own convictions. He knew that there was no lack of men in the Cabinet who were eager enough to apply the brake to the wheels of progress. His views at that crisis were in absolute harmony with those which he afterwards expressed, 'I wish to rally as large a portion of the British people as possible around the existing institutions of the country—the Throne, Lords, Commons, the Established Church. I do not wish new institutions but to preserve and strengthen the old. Some would confine the advantages of those institutions to as small a class as possible, I would throw them open to all who have the ability to comprehend them and the vigour to protect them. Others again would annihilate them for the purpose of forming new ones on fanciful and untried principles. I would, I repeat, preserve them, but increase their efficiency, and add to the number of their supporters. It has been my ruling principle through-

out my political life to endeavour to bring all classes, especially the middle and lower, within the pale of the true, not the spurious Constitution. I have ever wished to give the latter an interest in the preservation of privileges, which exclusion would no longer render obnoxious to them—to make them feel that whilst the Crown enjoyed its prerogatives, and the upper classes their honours, they also were vested with privileges most valuable to them, and moreover, that all, separately and collectively, rested on the common basis of National Utility.'

Durham always declared that this, so far as home politics were concerned, was, in rough outline, his political creed. He was now to justify it by his strenuous action on behalf of Reform.

CHAPTER IX

DURHAM AND BELGIUM

There is but one solution of these difficulties, and that is partition.—Talleyrand.

William I. of Holland and his treatment of the Belgians—Insurrection in Brussels, and proclamation of the independence of Belgium—The London Conference—Election of Leopold to the throne of Belgium—Stockmar's advice to the King—Durham's important share in settling the affairs of the new kingdom—Success of his policy—Leopold's attachment to Durham, and his comments on English affairs.

Foreign affairs, quite as much as home politics, claimed the instant attention of the new Ministry. The people of Brussels rose in revolt in the summer of 1830 against the Dutch supremacy. The United Netherlands, ever since 1815, had been a menace to the peace of Europe. Napoleon had brought Belgium under the rule of Holland, but there was no real cohesion between the two races. Their antecedents and their traditions were alike antagonistic, and Belgium, except during Napoleon's ascendency, had been under a different régime from that of Holland since the sixteenth century. Spain and Austria had held authority over the people in days when Holland was a Republic, and the sympathies of the people in the earlier years of the nineteenth century were with France. William I. of Holland was a maladroit ruler. He contrived to alienate his Belgian subjects; he disliked the French language, which was in vogue, and did all in his power to substitute Dutch. He threw the Catholics into opposition to his dynasty by his edicts on education, and at the same time

offended men of an opposite school by coercing the Press, and introducing into Belgium Dutch laws and officials. Over and above all this, his Belgian subjects were forced to contribute towards the interest on the excessive Dutch debt by imposts, which came home to their hearts, in the shape of taxes on food.

The July Revolution in France in 1830 brought matters to a climax, and the populace of Brussels attacked the palace of the Dutch Minister. Everywhere the demand grew insistent for a separation of government between the Dutch and Belgian provinces —a line of demarcation not less pronounced than that between Sweden and Norway. This was a demand which the Dutch King regarded as intolerable, and an appeal to arms was the consequence of his refusal of all concessions. After an insurrection of five days, in which the citizens of Brussels fought with success, the Dutch troops were driven out of the city, and on November 18 (1830) the independence of Belgium was proclaimed by a national congress, though Maestricht, Luxembourg and the citadel of Antwerp were still in possession of Dutch troops. King William, ere this, had appealed to the great Powers, and a conference assembled in London, which fixed a truce, and in January 1831 this conclave of diplomatists, recognising the inevitable, proceeded to discuss the question of separation. The Belgians could scarcely have taken up arms at a more favourable moment. Austria was entangled with the Italian Question, Russia had the Poles to reckon with, while France was ruled by Louis Philippe, who was jealous of any interference on the part of Prussia, and who recognised, moreover, that the sympathies of the Belgians were with France. He knew, since Belgium lay so near to the shores of England, that it was impolitic to allow his second son, the Duke de Nemours, to accept the Belgian throne, to

which he had been elected, for the rupture of relations with this country would have been dearly purchased at such a price.

After various negotiations, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, nephew by marriage of William IV. of England, and prospective son-in-law of Louis Philippe, was elected King of the Belgians June 26, 1831. The London Conference of the Great Powers determined the boundaries of Leopold's dominion, and Holland was allowed to retain all but the western part of Luxembourg, which was incorporated with the new kingdom. This was an arrangement which entirely failed to conciliate the Dutch. The King of Holland, in consequence, sought to recover his supremacy in the Netherlands by force of arms. Baron Stockmar asserted, in a letter to Durham, that Holland's determination to make war was entirely due to Russian intrigue, in which Prussia found it convenient to connive. It is at least certain that Russia would not have consented to the establishment of a kingdom based upon a revolutionary movement, if the outbreak in Poland had not at the moment engrossed all her energies. At the outset the Dutch troops were victorious, and when Leopold had been defeated near Louvaine, England and France came to his rescue.

The King appears to have half-repented his acceptance of the Crown, for its responsibilities and perils were becoming more serious and perplexing than a man of his limited capacity could face with the fortitude demanded. It was at this critical moment that Stockmar, one of the King's intimate friends and confidential advisers, reanimated his flagging courage with sound advice. 'Meanwhile, I call upon your Majesty,' he wrote, 'for only this much: 1. Never to lose heart; 2. Never to relax in activity, *on which your enemies base their hopes*; 3. Not to forget the *civil* organisation

in the *military*. The nation must see that, in the very thick of the storm, the concerns of peace are being pushed on. That hopes of peace should be kept alive, even though they should come to nothing in the end, is of the utmost importance.'

A few weeks later Stockmar wrote again, exhorting the King to maintain a firm attitude, to abandon any idea of resignation, and to bear in mind the main object of his going to Belgium. 'The true welfare of Belgium depends at this moment on a speedy peace, the establishment of a good administration, the annihilation of parties at home, all which are specially secured by the prompt recognition of the independence of Belgium by the whole of Europe. . . . For Belgium itself this [the King's abdication] would not be productive of the smallest advantage, but rather of extreme mischief. It would either lead to a general war, with a restoration as its consequence, or to the union with France, or possibly to the partition of the country. . . . At the most, the King may lose ground for a time by his acceptance of the Twenty-four Articles—that is, he may be less popular for a short time with the unreasoning, inconstant multitude. For this there is a sovereign remedy. Let him prove himself upright, firm, energetic, a King of brains, and we shall see whether, in a very short time, he is not again the most popular monarch in Europe. On the other hand, abdication would ruin him in the eyes of Europe. He would appear weak, inconstant, short-sighted, incompetent for the task he had undertaken. The King went to Belgium to secure peace for Europe, and to vindicate there the cause of Constitutional Monarchy. That is the mission which he has pledged himself to Europe, to the Powers, to Belgium, to fulfil. That there are difficulties to contend with is no reason for throwing

down his arms. The King's task is a fine one: let him show himself worthy of it.'

All through this embroglio Lord Durham bore a distinguished part. Leopold never hesitated to declare that, amongst the statesmen of Europe, he was his most trusted confidant, and at each new crisis of the affairs of the struggling nationality which he had been called to rule it was to Durham especially that he appealed for advice. His high regard and genuine affection often found expression, and, when Durham was broken down by trouble and ill-health, King Leopold assured him that no one, even amongst his own relatives, could be more sincerely attached to him, 'or feel a warmer interest in your welfare than I do.' A plentiful sheaf of the King's letters reveals the heartiness of this friendship, and the confidence which Leopold invariably placed in Durham's advice and judgment. Many of them are still too intimate and outspoken for quotation, but the correspondence in its entirety constitutes a fascinating secret chapter in the annals of diplomacy. All through the bitter and ignominious reign of George IV., when Leopold was at Claremont and Marlborough House, Durham had proved his staunchest friend, and not least in the years of his bereavement, when he had incurred the jealous and petulant suspicion of his father-in-law.

Durham was consulted at every turn of the Prince's fortunes, and more especially over his delicate relations with the English Court after the death of the Princess Charlotte, the offer of the throne of Greece, and, later, after his acceptance of the throne of Belgium, in the military struggle with Holland, and in the diplomatic relations of the newly constituted kingdom with Russia and France. The King was well aware that his widowed sister, the Duchess of Kent, and the young Princess Victoria, in the years of their comparative

obscurity at Kensington, when the attitude of the Court was anything but conciliatory, had no more loyal or sagacious adviser amongst the statesmen of that period. Leopold took a keen interest in Durham's personal affairs, and was attracted by the beauty and vivacity of the child, who lives on the canvas of Lawrence as Master Lambton, a boy whom he playfully called 'the Crown Prince.' He stood sponsor to Durham's second son, the youth who succeeded to the earldom in 1840, and through all the trials and vicissitudes of Durham's later life his friendship was unfailing. He used to say that he had great confidence in Durham's quick and clear way of gauging passing political events, and it was in response to his wish that the latter kept him in close touch with the trend of political opinion in England. Only the more important of Durham's letters to the King were copied by himself, and the whole of the originals, it is believed, were destroyed, with other valuable papers, in the fire at the Castle of Laeken in the year 1890; but the autograph letters from the King remain in the possession of the Durham family.

It lies outside the purpose of this book to describe all that passed at that critical juncture between the plenipotentiaries assembled in London and the Grey Cabinet, much less to indicate the process by which an amicable understanding was rendered possible between Prince Talleyrand and Lord Palmerston. It was Palmerston's aim to bring about a settlement, likely to create a bond of sympathy between the two nations, of a kind which, though slight at first, might reasonably be expected to become powerful when time had removed the causes of friction. The wisdom of his policy is evident in the friendly relations of Belgium and Holland to-day. Through all the negotiations—they were complicated by the question of the fortresses on the Belgian frontier—King Leopold and Baron Stockmar were in

constant communication with Durham. It was to the latter the King wrote when Holland suddenly determined to take up arms. He expressed astonishment at receiving tidings of Holland's intention to commence hostilities at once, and reminded Durham that he had the right to claim the protection of the five Powers, and particularly that of the British Government. He urged the immediate dispatch of a fleet to the Scheldt and the Dutch coast, feeling sure that such a demonstration would have the desired effect of quelling the hostile spirit of his neighbour. The Conference had declared, he pointed out, that the party first breaking the armistice would incur serious consequences, and that such violation would ensure the protection by the Powers of the party attacked. On this ground he now claimed armed intervention for the Belgian people.

Three weeks later, King Leopold, who chafed not a little at the comments in the English Press, and at the apparent hesitation of the Grey Cabinet to take the decisive step, protested against the attitude taken up by the Powers with regard to the Belgian fortresses. He asserted that the Powers had left the Belgians to decide which of the fortresses should be demolished, and the Belgians were, therefore, within their right in consulting only national interest in the matter. The claims which the Powers were advancing with regard to the material of the fortresses were, in his view, of small importance. The number of guns was really much below what was required for efficient defence. He begged Lord Durham to bear in mind the condition of Antwerp; so long as the Dutch held the citadel, the inhabitants could never be at ease, whilst the guarantee by the Powers of free navigation would prove only a farce. The armistice of November was made solely to safeguard Holland against the progress of the revolution, and the King maintained that, for this reason, the Conference agreed

to its indefinite duration. His Majesty further stated that the sudden attack by the Dutch at four different points, on August 1, found his troops unprepared to meet such an emergency. The Gardes Civiques were in their homes, most of them unarmed, and ignorant of the way to load a firelock. The regular force of 25,000 men was widely scattered, and it was impossible to concentrate them quickly. The failure of General Daine to obey the King's summons, to bring men and guns with as much promptitude as the circumstances of the troops permitted, chiefly led to the losses which followed.

Durham took energetic action. He promptly brought forward in the Cabinet a proposal in writing, which, after discussion, was submitted by Lord Grey to William IV., and it became the basis of the firm policy which quickly brought Holland to reason. Briefly stated, Durham's proposals were an armed intervention by sea and land on the part of England and France. He advocated the immediate blockade of the Scheldt by the English fleet, and a simultaneous advance on Antwerp by the French army. This, he contended, would completely preclude all possibility of effectual resistance, and could scarcely fail to bring about a settlement of what he well described as a 'tedious and complicated question.' The combined operations on the part of France and England would not awaken the jealousy of the other three Powers which had entered into the Treaty with Belgium, but seemed averse to carrying out its stipulations. At the same time Durham held that the movement of the French troops must be under safeguards which would prevent any attempt at permanent occupation, as nothing must be done which would excite the alarm of Russia, Prussia, and Austria. The operations must, in fact, be strictly defined as a convention between England and France, which sought

to bring about one object only, the expulsion of the Dutch from the newly constituted Belgian Kingdom.

Durham's bold policy in regard to Belgium at this crisis, though opposed in influential quarters, happily prevailed, with the result that the King of Holland was compelled immediately to withdraw his troops, and ultimately to admit the claims of Leopold. The statement which Durham read to the Cabinet on October 15 was forwarded by Lord Grey to the King the same day, and it shaped the policy which England pursued. 'I consider a combined and simultaneous operation by sea and land preferable for several reasons. It would be effective, which an embargo and blockade would not. It would not be a measure of war affecting, in its immediate action, the Dutch nation or the interests of British or European commerce, but it would be a measure of force applied at a particular spot to the Dutch King and his army, unjustly occupying—out of the Dutch territories—a place guaranteed by us and by all Europe to our allies the Belgians. This removal being effected, no necessity could exist for carrying the war into Dutch territory or molesting their ships or commerce, unless the King of Holland resented his forcible expulsion from Belgium by a declaration of war against us, in which case he would place himself still more in the wrong, and forfeit the sympathy and support of his own subjects, and could, under no pretence, be supported by any of the great Powers. The pressure of an embargo and blockade could not be effective at this time of the year, and would leave the *status quo* precisely the same as regarded Belgium, producing only additional irritation in the minds of the Dutch. A blockade of the Scheldt by the fleet, and the simultaneous movement of a French army on Antwerp, would be so immediate and decisive an operation, so completely precluding all possibility of an effectual resistance, that

the mere announcement would most likely produce submission on the part of the King of Holland, and a settlement of this tedious and complicated question.

'The combined operations would have another advantage: they must preclude the expression of alarm and jealousy on the part of those three Powers which have entered into the Treaty with Belgium, but will not concur in its execution—Prussia, Russia, and Austria. In the course of these proceedings they never objected to the eventual removal of the Dutch from Antwerp by force; on the contrary the Emperor of Russia distinctly proposed to me the occupation by an English army. The three Powers objected to, and dreaded, the separate entry of a French army into Belgium, as the result of French excitement and for French interests, fearing that the combined effect of both might render it impossible for the French Government to avoid an attempt at permanent occupation, which they would be obliged to resist, and that thus a general war would be produced. The possibility of this result is avoided by the proposed measure, which applies British control to the slightest movement of the French army, and will, in its development, necessarily guard against any act of the French which would excite the jealousy and alarm of the three Powers, limiting their military operations solely to the one object—namely, the evacuation of the Belgian territories.

'It must also be observed that if we decide against the employment of a French army, as part of a combined plan of Anglo-French operations, that determination will not prevent its eventual, nay very speedy, entry into Belgium. The Belgians are fully aware of their position. They know that a movement on their part can only be beneficial. If they beat the Dutch they regain their tainted credit and their territory. If they are beaten, they fall back on a French army ready to advance at an

hour's notice, and which, once in motion, will cause the evacuation of Antwerp and the execution of the Treaty. This would be a separate and solely French operation, involving us in difficulties from which we can only escape by rendering it a component part of our own plan and the instrument of British counsels and measures. I am therefore of opinion that, whilst the mouth of the Scheldt is blockaded by our fleet, a French army should be marched against Antwerp, its objects and operations having been previously strictly defined and limited in a Convention between England and France.'

Durham's suggestions were adopted. The Channel Fleet blockaded the Scheldt; France sent an army of 50,000 men to expel the Dutch from the soil of Belgium. Antwerp was bombarded, and at the close of 1832 the Dutch garrison was compelled to surrender; but it was not until 1838 that Holland finally acquiesced in the independence of Belgium. It became, what Durham wished it to be, a barrier-state, and, in consequence of its neutrality—guaranteed by all the Powers—it has never been entangled in wars, and is now the most densely populated and not the least prosperous kingdom in Europe.

Leopold's comments on public affairs in these letters are often diverting. He watched from Brussels, with lively interest, the strife of political parties in England. He thought the Tories, in the spring of 1833, were doing the work of the Radicals, and his verdicts on some of the statesmen of the period were, to say the least, not flattering. The fall of the Ottoman Power seemed to him, as to a great many other people, to be imminent at that time. He declared with a touch of humour, that he began to regret he had not accepted the proffered throne of Greece; there was more elbow-room in that part of the world, and if he had been on the spot he could have petitioned to be translated from

Athens to Constantinople, which would be better than turning Turkey into a Russian province.

When Durham went to Russia in 1835, Leopold warned him about the character of the people. He said he would find the Russians very agreeable, not less artful, and exceedingly false. His opinion even of the Tsar was not altogether flattering, but was naturally coloured by the attitude which Nicholas had assumed towards the newly created Kingdom of Belgium.

CHAPTER X

THE REFORM STRUGGLE

Our prospects are obscured for a moment; but I trust only for a moment. It is impossible that the whisper of a faction should prevail against the voice of a nation.—Lord John Russell.

1831

Preparation of the Reform Bill by the 'Committee of Four'—The 'Plan of Reform'—Durham's report of the Committee's proceedings—The 'Plan' a compromise—Declarations of Grey and of 'Finality John'—The King's favourable attitude towards the Bill—Wellington's 'no surrender' policy—Introduction of the Measure by Lord John Russell—Result of the motion for the Second Reading—Durham's review of the situation—His speech on the Bill in the House of Lords—General Gascoigne's motion—Durham on the proposed dissolution—The King dissolves Parliament in person—Result of General Election—Second Reform Bill—Death of 'Master Lambton.'

Lord Grey, three years before he came to power, had spoken of his own career as over, and had hinted that his political loneliness was complete; but the overthrow of the Wellington Administration forced him to the front, and at sixty-six he took office (November 1830), having stipulated that Parliamentary Reform—the dream of his life—should at last be realised. Parliament stood prorogued until February 3, 1831, in order that ample time might be secured for drawing up the Government proposals on a measure which the people were now demanding in almost menacing terms. It was to Durham that Grey turned, in the first instance, in view of this great task. He was regarded in all the great towns as the hope of the new Administration—the man above all others who might be trusted to do justice to the acknowledged grievances

of the people. His popular sobriquet, 'Radical Jack,' was itself a proof of the confidence of the populace, and his presence in the Grey Administration was justly regarded as the best pledge of a bold and energetic policy.

What followed is perhaps best told in Durham's words: 'Shortly after the formation of the Government, Lord Grey asked me if I would assist him in preparing the Reform Bill. I answered that I would do so with the greatest pleasure. He then said, "You can have no objection to consult Lord John Russell." I replied "Certainly not, but the reverse."' The outcome of this conversation, Durham goes on to state, was that he placed himself in communication with Lord John, who came to his house in Cleveland Row to discuss the matter. They determined to summon to their aid Sir James Graham and Lord Duncannon, and in this informal way the historic 'Committee of Four' came into existence.

Graham was not exactly a man after Durham's heart, and it was probably in deference to Grey that he was appointed. He was certainly the least progressive member of the quartette, a fact which the political caricaturists of the hour were quick to seize, since they represented him as the man in charge of the brake on the new Reform Coach. It is certain that the more timid Whigs were afraid that the Premier's son-in-law would drive too furiously. Durham figures frequently, in an amusing way, in the clever political cartoons of 'H. B.,' which in the thirties and forties heightened the gaiety of the town. It used to be said that there never was a period in the annals of the country when political incidents had so shrewd and droll a pictorial commentator as Doyle. But that statement requires qualification now, in the presence of the incomparable political cartoons of Sir Carruthers

Gould, which, apart from their artistic claims, are alive with the genius of unerring instinct in the interpretation of the questions of the hour. It was at this juncture that the two famous cartoons, the 'Tri-Coloured Witches' and the 'New Reform Coach,' which are reproduced in these pages, appeared. In the one, Grey, Durham, and Brougham represent the hags in 'Macbeth,' and from under the cauldron, into which they are casting ingredients, the flames are mounting high, with the help of a generous expenditure of 'Durham coal.' In the other the 'Reform Coach,' with William IV. looking anxiously out of the window, is jolting down hill. Grey is driving, and Durham sits by his side on the box, ready to grasp the reins if the old coachman's nerve should fail at the sharp turn of the road which is in sight. Both cartoons attracted wide attention at the time, and incidentally show the position which Durham had attained in the country.

Graham was probably surprised, and certainly flattered, by his inclusion in the Committee. He wrote to Durham a few days later: 'On my first entrance into public life you received me with generous kindness, and I hope to its close we shall act together as friends, and never cease to entertain that warm regard, which is the real cement of official intercourse, and increases our power of serving the public with efficiency.' He did not long survive, as a Cabinet Minister, the passing of the Reform Bill, for in 1834 he quarrelled with his colleagues over the Irish Church question, and finally took up a hostile attitude to the Liberal Party. Two years before Durham's death he became Home Secretary under Sir Robert Peel.

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Ireland. He was, moreover, a *persona grata* to William IV., and was more trusted by the King than perhaps any other of the Whigs. Duncannon was not in the least degree a courtier, but his character and speech were both of a kind to inspire confidence. Durham was impulsive, positive, and sanguine to the last degree; Duncannon was slow, cautious, shrewd, and conciliatory. The Committee of Four met again and again, in the late autumn of 1830, at Durham's house in Cleveland Row, and thrashed out point by point the outlines of the great scheme. Durham acted as chairman, and, in that capacity, signed the daily minutes of the proceedings. They received many suggestions from various quarters, and notably from Lord Althorp. Finally, at Durham's suggestion, Lord John Russell drew up a scheme, which was carefully discussed and greatly altered. Meanwhile, all the memorials from different towns and public bodies were dealt with by Durham at the request of Grey, and he also received at Cleveland Row deputations from all parts of the United Kingdom.

The plan of Reform which was adopted, after long and anxious discussion, disfranchised upwards of fifty, so-called, 'rotten boroughs,' and allotted one member, instead of two, to the least considerable towns, whilst a number of constituencies were swept out of existence. Large towns, on the other hand, received the privilege of sending members to Parliament, whilst the admission of copyholders to vote in counties, and the shortening of the duration of the poll, were other parts of the scheme. Sir James Graham proposed a plan of registration, which was adopted with some alterations, whilst plans of Reform for Scotland and Ireland, suggested respectively by Cockburn and Duncannon, were also embodied in the scheme. Durham proposed triennial Parliaments, which Russell opposed with success, and

ultimately the limit was fixed at five years. Durham stoutly pressed that the borough franchise should be fixed at 10*l.*, and was not less anxious that the principle —which now prevails—of voting by ballot should be adopted. In this he was supported by Duncannon and Graham, but Russell fought tenaciously against the idea. 'I was very reluctant,' Lord John afterwards confessed, 'but, finding the other members of the Committee against me, I consented, on the condition that the franchise in towns should be raised to £20. I thought this was the most likely method of preventing the bribery which I apprehended would ensue from the ballot.'

The Committee presently discovered that a 20*l.* franchise would greatly restrict the number of electors in small boroughs, and therefore, in the end, adopted a uniform suffrage, based on 10*l.* yearly value. The real question at issue in the Committee of Four was whether a cautious and incomplete measure should be proposed, or one which was bold and comprehensive. Lord John Russell, with all his virtues, was not won over to the bolder course without a struggle; in fact he did not conceal his apprehensions. He proposed a graduated scale for the franchise, and declared that he wished the measure to be one that would be able 'to stand the test of a severe scrutiny from its enemies.'

Durham, as chairman of the Committee, drew up the report of the proceedings. It was addressed to Lord Grey, and was in the following terms:—'In compliance with your directions, we have carefully examined into the state of the representation, with a view to its thorough and effective Reform, and we now present to you, as the result of our labours, three Bills, amending the representation of England, Scotland and Ireland. In framing them, we have been actuated by the belief that it is not the wish or the intention of his Majesty's

Ministers to concede only as much as might for the moment evade or stifle the general demand for a complete alteration of the existing system; or to propose the adoption of such a measure as could merely be considered a bare redemption of their pledges to their Sovereign and the country. We have been, on the contrary, convinced that it is their desire to effect such a permanent settlement of this great and important question as will no longer render its agitation subservient to the designs of the factious and discontented, but, by its wise and comprehensive provisions, inspire all classes of the community with a conviction that their rights and privileges are at length duly secured and consolidated. We have not been insensible to the great and appalling dangers which attend any further delay in effecting this settlement, or to the notorious fact that obstinate resistance to claims, just in themselves, leads not to their suppression but to the advancement of others infinitely larger, a forced compliance with which would produce consequences never contemplated by the petitioners in the first instance.

'We have, therefore, been of opinion that the plan of Reform proposed by his Majesty's Ministers ought to be of such a scope and description as to satisfy all reasonable demands, and remove, at once and for ever, all rational grounds of complaint from the minds of the intelligent and independent portion of the community. By pursuing such a course, we conceive that the surest and most effectual check will be opposed to the restless spirit of innovation which, founding its open claims to public support on the impossibility and hopelessness of obtaining any redress of acknowledged abuses, aims in secret at nothing less than the overthrow of all our institutions, and even of the Throne itself.

'We propose in one instance to make this a measure of disfranchisement. In the case of nomination

boroughs—that system is one so entirely at variance with the spirit of the Constitution, so indefensible in practice, and so justly odious to the whole Empire, that we could not consider any measure of Reform as otherwise than trifling and nugatory which did not include the abolition or purification of these boroughs. We propose, therefore, to disfranchise all boroughs the population of which amounts to less than 2,000 inhabitants. This will effect the extinction of the worst class; and we propose also to deprive of one member all those whose population amounts to less than 4,000.

'The purification of this latter class of boroughs, as well as those of cities and boroughs where the right of voting is enjoyed by close corporations, will, we think, be ensured by the extension of the elective franchise in them to all householders, within the town or borough and parish, entitled by the late Act to serve on juries, those who are rated to the relief of the poor, or to the inhabited house tax at 20*l.* per annum.

'We propose to grant representatives to all large and populous towns of more than 10,000 inhabitants, of which there are unrepresented now in England about thirty.

'The right of voting to be vested (as in the case of the purified boroughs) in householders of 20*l.* per annum.

'In adopting this rate we have considered that we have granted the elective franchise to a constituent body, including all the intelligence and respectability of the independent classes of society. If we had not felt ourselves called upon rather to extend than limit the elective franchise we might perhaps have recommended the propriety of rendering it uniform by immediately merging in it all the multifarious and inconvenient rights of voting now in existence.

'We have, however, provided for their eventual extinction, and, in the meantime, we trust, by the addition of an independent constituency, and other arrangements, we shall effectually prevent the recurrence of those scenes of corruption and political profligacy which too often occur where the right of voting is vested in those whose want of education and state of dependence render them quite unfitted for its exercise.

'We propose to give additional members to counties whose population amounts to more than 150,000, dividing them into districts, leaving the forty shillings franchise as it now exists, but enfranchising leaseholders of 50*l.* per annum, and copyholders of 10*l.* per annum.

'Having adopted the principle of the amount of population as the surest proof of the necessity of disfranchisement in some cases, and an increase in the number of members in others, we could discover no test more fixed and recognised than that of the last Parliamentary census of 1821; upon which, therefore, our measure, both with regard to counties and cities, is founded.

'We next turned our attention to the necessity of diminishing the expenses of elections, and we propose to accomplish this by—

'The enforcement of residence;
'The registration of votes;
'The adoption of ballot;
'The increase of the number of polling booths;
'The shortening of the duration of the poll;
'And in taking the poll (in counties) in hundreds or divisions.

'We finally propose that the duration of Parliament should be limited to five years.

'We have embodied these arrangements, and other measures of detail in connection with them, in three Bills, the heads of which we annex to this Report.

(Signed) 'DURHAM.
'JAMES R. G. GRAHAM.
'JOHN RUSSELL.
'DUNCANNON.

'January 14, 1831.'

Durham wrote to Grey, suggesting that the King's views should be definitely ascertained before the plan was submitted to the Cabinet.

'My dear Lord Grey,—Don't you think it would be advisable to see the King, if possible, before the question of Reform is brought before the Cabinet, in order to sound him on the subject, to ascertain how far he is impressed with the notion of its necessity—whether he sees how general the cry is for it—if he is aware that the Duke of Wellington's defeat was immediately owing to his declaration against it—and how impossible it must be to save Ireland, if there is any discontent or party spirit in England. Whether he contemplates the result of a Ministry going out on the ground of the King's hostility to Reform—and the formation of another and an ultra-Tory one (the only alternative save Hume, Hunt, Cobbett, and O'Connell) with all its consequences—opposition in Parliament backed and supported by the Press and the people.

'Having generally sounded him, you would be better prepared to oppose or concede to the moderatissimi in the Cabinet.

'As for the Bill, you can alter it as you please. With a view to its being carried, the only thing to be avoided is being liable to a charge of having proposed an ineffective and therefore sham reform.

'I send you the enclosed report from Durham. Not

a meeting takes place without an expression of feeling against the existence of rotten burghs, and for the extension of the franchise to householders.

'Yours ever.

'D.'

The plan of Reform was, in a sense, a compromise between the demands of the Radicals and the misgivings of the Whigs. Cobbett, in his own blunt fashion, repudiated the notion that much credit was due to Lord Grey for the measure. He held, not without a degree of truth, that the Reform of the House of Commons was as much forced upon Grey in 1831 as Catholic Emancipation was forced upon the Duke of Wellington in 1829, but he overshot the mark when he added that the Prime Minister held back as much as he dared venture to hold back in the presence of an agitation which had suddenly grown menacing to the institutions of the country. The Radicals did not forget the Bill for Reform which Durham introduced in 1821, with its provisions for triennial Parliaments, household suffrage, and electoral districts, and they were inclined to think that his hands had been tied in the new measure by the timidity of his political colleagues. It is certain that Durham did not regard the measure, vast and sweeping though the changes were which it proposed to effect, as perfect, and he did not conceal his chagrin when the Cabinet, in deference to the hostility of William IV. and the apprehensions of Lord Grey, struck out the ballot from the scheme.

Grey and Russell contrived, by their public utterances, to leave the impression that they regarded the measure as the last word on the subject, and in after years the latter found himself described, in consequence, as 'Finality John.' The plan of the Committee of Four, as modified by the Cabinet, did not go as far as Durham

wished, but it cut away what was rotten, it shielded every interest that was worthy of preservation, and introduced not a little which gave the middle classes a real share in the government of the country. The Bill, for so the plan of Reform now became, was promptly submitted to the King. His Majesty at the time was at the Pavilion, and in a letter written from Brighton, January 31, 1831, to Durham, the Prime Minister describes the first reception of the scheme. 'Within ten minutes after my arrival here, I was introduced to the King, and he immediately entered into the consideration of our plan of Reform. He attended very minutely to every part of it, put questions wherever doubt occurred, and at the conclusion understood it perfectly. The result is most satisfactory. He approves entirely of the general view and effect of the measure, reserving to himself only the right of making such observations on the details as further consideration may suggest. He was particularly pleased with your report, and entirely concurred in the statement, so powerfully and clearly made in it, of the necessity of doing something, and that that something should be effectual and final.'

Some of the members of the Cabinet, Lansdowne and Palmerston notably, were at the best but lukewarm Reformers, and rumours of Cabinet dissensions ran around the clubs. The Duke of Wellington—the wish was father to the thought—just before the meeting of Parliament, went about asserting that the Reform Question could not be carried, and that the Grey Administration was doomed to collapse. The obstinate temper of Wellington did more to stiffen the demand for political Reform in the country than almost anything else. He exasperated the Radicals by his intolerant 'no surrender' policy, and, as if this was not enough, he broke up the old Tory party, for a considerable section of his own followers renounced

him and all his works, in consequence of what they regarded as the cowardly surrender over Catholic Emancipation. Meanwhile the position was critical. Lord John Russell confided his fears to Durham, and was apprehensive whether the Government proposals would be able to stand the test of a severe scrutiny from opponents. He confessed that returns from various parts of the country had greatly increased his anxiety about the measure. Brougham, always a thorn in the side of the Ministry, was, as usual, 'intoxicated with the exuberance of his own verbosity,' and, in consequence, disputatious to the last degree. Durham was ill when the plan was submitted to the Cabinet, and was therefore not present at its first discussion, so the Committee of Four was only represented by Sir James Graham, as Lord Duncannon and Lord John Russell were not then members of the Cabinet.

'On the morning of the next Cabinet, when the question was to be reconsidered,' Durham states, 'I received a pressing request from Sir James Graham to be present if possible, as he had great reason to fear that the Chancellor meant to oppose that part of the plan which abolished rotten boroughs. I did go,' he adds, 'although very unwell, but Brougham had altered his mind, and said nothing.' Durham would undoubtedly have had the honour of introducing the Reform Bill in the House of Commons if he had still been a member of that assembly, for during the last ten years he had made the question peculiarly his own, was in close touch with the leaders of public opinion in all the great towns, and had at his back, not merely the confidence, but the enthusiasm, of all who were in earnest about Reform.

Althorp, though Leader of the House, was a hesitating and unready speaker, and therefore, though universally respected, his colleagues felt that it was

impossible to confide to him the introduction of the measure. He had judgment, tact, and great adroitness in conciliatory speech, and it would be ungenerous not to acknowledge the part which he played in the historic struggle. It was said, with a touch of generous exaggeration, by one of the most implacable foes of Reform, that it was Althorp's fine temper which determined the issue. It is certain he never lost his head through all the protracted and heated discussions which arose, and it is equally certain that he never failed to do justice to the points raised by the Opposition. None of the Whig leaders possessed a more chivalrous spirit, or were actuated by a keener sense of public duty. It was said of him, with truth, that his mind was like a reserve fund, not invested in showy securities, but always of staple value. He had, in short, the genius of common sense, and men trusted him. Lord John Russell always admitted that he owed not a little to Durham at the commencement of his political career. Amongst other things he owed his selection as pilot of the Reform Bill in the Commons. Brougham was hotly opposed to the choice of the young Paymaster for the post of honour, but Durham was resolute, and in the end prevailed. So it came to pass that Lord John got the chance to win his spurs.

When Parliament met on February 3, 1831, Lord Grey announced in the House of Lords that the Reform Bill, after laborious and difficult discussion, was formulated, and would be shortly introduced in the other House. The country was, in consequence, on the tiptoe of expectation when Lord John Russell brought forward the measure on Tuesday, March 1. The secret had been curiously well kept, and anxiety to know the extent of the concession was universal. Men fought and struggled for places in the Strangers' Gallery, and every inch of the House was packed. Lord John rose

at six o'clock and spoke for two hours and a quarter, and as he unfolded his scheme his explanations were received with cheers of approval and shouts of derision. Never a great orator, he scarcely rose to the occasion, but the proposals which he made in his low, unimpassioned voice, spoke for themselves, and the look of dismay on the faces of men who sat for boroughs which it was proposed to disfranchise was diverting—at least to those who had neither part nor lot in rotten boroughs.

'They are mad, they are mad,' was one of the comments which Durham heard, as he watched the scene; but Peel looked both grave and angry, for he was shrewd enough to see there was method in their madness. All the same, there were not a few members of the House of Commons who went away laughing; Lord John's speech seemed to them nothing better than an 'elaborate and audacious jest.' Even those who were heartily in sympathy with the Bill had their grave misgivings. 'Burdett and I walked home together,' states Hobhouse, 'and we agreed that there was very little chance of the measure being carried.' They reckoned, however, without their host, and next morning, 'Lord John Reformer,' as Sydney Smith promptly dubbed him, awoke and found himself famous. The Reform Bill did not give the people all they wanted, but they were quick to see that it broke up the exclusive old system and took the weapons out of the hands of the enemies of progress.

Then began the tug of war, but there is no need to recount in detail a twice-told tale, though Durham, as much as any man, bore the brunt of the battle. The Grey Ministry was, in truth, sore let and hindered at almost every stage of the struggle by differences of opinion amongst its own enemies. The Cabinet was almost exclusively aristocratic; eleven out of thirteen of its chief members were peers or held courtesy titles,

and, what was more to the point, some of them were followers of Canning, and were inspired at best with only a languid desire for Reform. The bitterness in society over the measure was intense; it was likened to the old divisions of families during the Civil War, and ladies in the most exclusive circles, with rare exceptions, took the view of Sir Robert Peel, who held that the Bill would 'sever every link of connection between the poorer classes and that class from which their representatives are usually chosen.' Talk of a compromise began to be whispered, and some of the Ministers, if Greville is to be trusted, were heartily ashamed of the whole affair. But the nation, in the broad sense, was at the back of Lord Grey, and he, for his part, was determined to see the matter through.

After prolonged discussion, leave was given to bring in the Bill, and on March 21, Lord John moved the second reading, which was promptly challenged by an amendment that the measure be read a second time that day six months. The division was taken at three o'clock on the morning of the 22nd, and the second reading was carried by a majority of one in the fullest House on record. Macaulay has described the scene. The shouts for and against were like two volleys of cannon from opposite sides of a field of battle. After the division, the tellers could scarcely fight their way to the table. 'You might have heard a pin drop as Duncannon read the numbers. Then again the shouts broke out and many of us shed tears.' It was a narrow shave, but it spelt victory all the same. 'It is better to capitulate than to be taken by storm,' exclaimed one of the cynics of the hour. Outside, the people, a vast throng, who had waited patiently till four in the morning for the result, were frantic with joy. But the Opposition quickly began to discount the triumph and to assert that no Government with so

narrow a majority could proceed, and that, in fact, they were certain to resign.

On the day after the division Durham reviewed the position of affairs in the following letter to Lord Grey:—

'My dear Lord Grey,—I feel quite satisfied with the result of last night. We have all the advantages, with reference to a dissolution, of a defeat without the discredit of it, whilst also we are enabled to go on with the necessary financial business.

'We can now go to the King and say, "The measure you permitted us to propose and sanctioned has been approved of by a majority of the House of Commons, composed of great numbers (I have no doubt, by adding pairs, it may be stated as the majority of the whole 658), but not such a majority as we require to carry it through all the obstacles which will be interposed in the committee. Of this necessary majority we are deprived by not being in possession of that Government influence which, under the present system, fairly belongs to the Administration, and is dishonourably retained from us by the present holders. We have a just claim therefore to ask your Majesty for the means of obtaining that support which is our right, and is improperly withheld."

'It may also be said after the division of last night, under all the disadvantages above stated, we still have successfully accomplished the first step of a recognition of the principle of our measure—barely, it is true—but yet a positive recognition. What is wanting to make it a triumphant recognition? The possession of our Government interest. All England will see this, and if it is refused us it will be considered by them as an act of avowed opposition on the part of the King to the Bill. He will then be considered as defeating it by

withholding the notorious and easy means of ensuring its success—a dangerous position for him to be placed in, and uselessly dangerous. For even in the present Parliament, with three hundred and two members pledged in support of this measure, what chance is there of an evasive measure being carried? The present difficulty will then recur again and again, and if at last a dissolution is forced upon the King, under what different circumstances will it take place? The people will then have been absolved from their support of this plan and, urged by their disappointment, will run into all the extremes from which we have now dislodged them. Members will be returned, pledged to infinitely more extensive concessions, and the whole question will be again re-opened—not to be considered, as now, with reference to the starting-point of no Reform, but as to how much farther we shall go in the pursuit of that Reform, a great amount of which is openly acknowledged as indispensably necessary.

'The question now is between No Reform and Real but Rational Reform. The question then will be between Half Reform and ultra or Radical Reform. From this danger we shall be saved by a present dissolution. The minds of the electors of the Empire are firmly bent on the present plan, to which they have given their deliberate but enthusiastic adhesion. Their representatives will be returned pledged to that plan—nothing less and nothing more—and a permanent settlement will be beneficially effected of what otherwise would be an interminable source of agitation.

'I think it should also be stated to the King that for the very purpose of effecting his own desire—the avoiding the necessity of a dissolution—nothing could be, nothing has proved to be more injurious than the prevalence of the notion that he is unfavourable to that measure. Many members, before inclined to support us, went

back on hearing it so strenuously asserted that the King would never consent, and that the very necessity for advising it was created by the assertions, unauthorised I know, but still which might be firmly checked, of members of his household and family.

'At what hour do you go to the Levee? and how do you feel as to the division? I may be too sanguine, but, relying on the King as I do, I am quite satisfied with the result.

'Ever yours affectionately,

'D.'

Five days after the second reading of the Reform Bill, on Lord Wharncliffe's motion for returns of the population of the different counties of England and Wales, Durham saw and seized the opportunity of defending the Reform Bill from his place in the House of Lords. He described the menacing attitude of the manufacturing districts, the almost open insurrection and rebellion which prevailed, and the imperative necessity which had arisen, in consequence, of boldly redeeming the pledge the Grey Ministry had given, on coming into office. He explained in detail the provisions of the Bill, and drew attention to the notorious corruption which prevailed in the rotten boroughs, declared that he had heard again and again of the sale of seats in the House of Commons as a matter of daily occurrence, and gave, as an instance, a case in which 1,200*l.* a year was paid for the representation of one of these places—a place of which the member elected had never heard before, and which he would never visit.

He cited, on the other hand, the position of towns in his own county, Sunderland, Gateshead, Shields, as towns which were well entitled to return representatives. He protested that the fears which had been expressed in the House of Lords three years previously, as to the effect

of Catholic Emancipation, had been entirely falsified. 'The Catholic Relief Bill has admitted within our walls noblemen who were long deprived of their rights; it has opened the doors of the other House of Parliament to as loyal, as honest, and as respectable men as are to be found in the country; and it has erased that foul blot of religious and political intolerance which so long disgraced our constitution.' He protested that his Majesty's Ministers had no desire to change the institutions of the country; on the contrary they were anxious to protect and strengthen them. 'We propose to enable your Lordships to exercise your high privileges, consistently with the legitimate rights of the people and the real interests of the State. We do not permit even the smallest jewel to be extracted from the Crown; we add to its grace and lustre. We secure to the Monarch the undisturbed enjoyment of all his dignities and prerogatives, sustained and cherished by the love of an affectionate people, and on them we propose to confer the noblest gift which can be presented to freemen—the power of choosing representatives, in whom is vested the maintenance of their properties, their rights, and their privileges.'

The Reform Bill, when Durham delivered this speech, had not of course reached the Lords. It had still to be discussed, clause by clause, by the House of Commons, sitting in committee, but Durham was anxious to take time by the forelock, and to reveal, if possible, the sweet reasonableness of its provisions to his fellow peers, though the deadlock which occurred a few months later made it plain that he might just as well have talked to the winds or the waves.

Writing to Grey on April 10, Durham urged him to remain firm on the vital principles of the Reform Bill. 'Your course, I apprehend, is clear—to stand by the Bill—not to permit any alteration of its main

principles, namely disfranchisement of all rotten boroughs, and the enfranchisement of 10*l.* householders. It is too late now to raise the qualification. Once announced and approved of by the whole country, it cannot be retracted. As for the numbers, they will, as you will see by our proposed alterations (it will be politic to call them modifications) be brought nearly to the old amount.'

After the short Easter recess the Opposition in the Commons plucked up courage, and General Gascoigne on April 18, when it was proposed that the Bill should go into committee, moved as an instruction that the numbers of members of Parliament for England and Wales ought not to be diminished. The House divided, with the result that this resolution was carried by a majority of eight. Lord Grey saw his opportunity and took it. The reception of the Reform Bill in Parliament had already shown him that it was impossible to carry the measure in the existing House of Commons without drastic modifications, which would have disappointed the just expectations of the people. Placed suddenly in a minority, the Ministry appealed to the King, and, to his credit, William IV. rose to the occasion. The Cabinet urged the immediate dissolution of Parliament, in order that the sentiment of the nation might be unequivocably declared. The King was at first greatly averse to this step, and it required all the tact and firmness of Grey—both stand revealed in his published correspondence with William IV.—to bring His Majesty to such a decision.

Durham, always vehement and decided, protested, more than anyone else in the Ministry, that dissolution, under the circumstances, was the only course. He had written to Grey a letter during the crisis, which the Prime Minister submitted to the King, and in it he did not mince words.

'March 22, 1831, Tuesday morning, 12 o'clock.

'My dear Lord Grey,—The letters are gone on in circulation [the letters to and from the King on the question of a dissolution]. It is surprising that throughout all these arguments against dissolution, grounded on the excited state of public feeling, he never for an instance alludes to what will be the effect of a rejection of the Bill, if unaccompanied by a dissolution. From this omission one would imagine that he fancies the country would quietly acquiesce in the rejection—a rejection effected, too, through the agency of the very parties who are thus forcibly acquitting themselves in opposition to the declared judgment of the King, his Ministers, and the country.

'In the event of a dissolution, the excitement would be directed into the harmless course of an enthusiastic action in favour of the King and his Government, directed, it is true, warmly against the defenders of the borough system, but, in an equally strong degree, pronounced in favour of the prerogatives of the Crown; of the beneficial use of which, for their own interests, the act of dissolution must have convinced them.

'Is there an instance of any excitement at elections, producing occurrences unconnected with the electioneering objects of the moment? So far from increasing popular excitement, a dissolution would be its best and safest vent. On the other hand, what appearances would attend the exhibition of public feeling if the Bill were rejected, a dissolution refused by the King, and the Ministry dissolved, as it necessarily must be?

'Feelings of disappointment, of almost reckless despair, would be added to that excitement which is now existing. The people are quiet now because they repose with confidence on the support of the King, should the borough faction be too strong for his

Ministers in the House of Commons. Take away from them this last resource, on which they so confidently rely, and who will answer for the consequences? To this may be added the danger of creating a notion that the King has not been sincere in his support of the question. The country will naturally say: How could it be expected that such a question, altering the whole system under which the majority of the House of Commons has been elected, and by which they have thriven at the expense of the country, could be carried except in a Parliament expressly summoned for the purpose of taking it into consideration? The King must then have contemplated the certain arrival of that period at which the sincerity of his determination would be put to the test.

'The King has denied to his Ministers their legitimate right to the additional strength which would accrue to them from the dissolution of a Parliament, elected under the influence and direction of their predecessors, and most undoubtedly not when the question which renders it necessary is one on which the whole country unanimously supports the measure recommended to Parliament, and refused by it. If, therefore, the King refuses his consent to that constitutional measure, which would, to the conviction of every sane man in the country, ensure the success of the Bill, the country will say that he never was in earnest, or thoroughly determined to carry it. In fact it would be another mode of refusing the Royal assent.

'What feelings would then exist in the public minds? Distrust of the King, whom they would proclaim to be the only obstacle to the attainment of their wishes; hatred and vengeance against those who have refused their claims, and to whom, by the way, the King must unite himself for the purpose of carrying on the Government; and a conviction, of all others the

most dangerous, that the existence of the present form of government is incompatible with their attainment of those rights and privileges to which they feel themselves entitled. Are these feelings not more likely to produce the tumults, massacres, &c., and the downfall of institutions, to which so much allusion is made, than noisy but transient exhibitions of popular enthusiasm which accompany, it is true, but always terminate with every election?

'Now as to Ireland, it is ascertained, beyond the power of contradiction, that if a General Election were now to take place, that agitation which has so lately existed on the subject of the Union would be, if not destroyed, certainly in abeyance, and that the one object held in view would be Reform. Is this no benefit? It is surely of great importance that the Irish people should be convinced that there is a subject, which even their own leaders consider of paramount importance to that of Repeal; so much so that they are content to waive it; and it is often found that a question once put by can never be resumed with the same effect.

'It is evident, to conclude, that the excitement of a General Election would only tend to weakening the enemies of Reform, and strengthening its friends, and ought therefore to be dreaded by the one and desired by the other. In which class is the King to be ranked? His determination as to dissolution must decide this.

'I have written these observations as you receive them, and have not time even to copy them. I dare say many of the thoughts, so badly expressed, must have suggested themselves to you, but I thought it better to state them to you as they arose in my mind, after reading the letters you sent me.

'Ever yours affectionately,

'D.

General Gascoigne's motion, over which the Ministers were beaten, brought matters to a head. Lord Grey and other members of the Cabinet were dining that night at Durham's house in Cleveland Row, when Lord Althorp sent a message, apologising for his absence, adding that, in his view, dissolution ought at once to take place. Grey, there and then, wrote to the King 'humbly recommending' such a step. Meanwhile, on the night of the 21st, Lord Wharncliffe, in the House of Lords, pointedly asked Lord Grey whether it was true that the Ministers had advised the King to dissolve Parliament, and, when the latter refused to answer the question, Lord Wharncliffe gave notice that he should move next night an address to the King protesting against such a proposed exercise of the Royal prerogative. But a good deal may be done in a few hours in a political crisis. Next morning, Grey, accompanied by Brougham and Durham, sought an audience of his Majesty for the purpose of obtaining his consent. The interview was long, and the issue uncertain. It was only when the King realised that the tone adopted in the Lords seemed to question the likelihood of his taking such a step that his scruples vanished. Durham scribbled a hasty note to the Countess, to tell her the result of the audience. 'All is right. The King has consented to a dissolution. Hurrah! I am too delighted to say more.'

What actually happened is described by Harriet Martineau in her 'History of the Peace,' a book which owes some of its intimate knowledge of political affairs to the writer's close friendship with Lord Durham. '"What! did they dare to meddle with his prerogative!" the King exclaimed; "he would presently show them what he could and would do. He had given his promise, and now he would lose no time : he would go instantly —that very moment—and dissolve Parliament by his

own voice." "As soon as the Royal carriages could be got ready," his Ministers agreed. "Never mind the carriages; send for a hackney coach," replied the King—a saying which spread over the kingdom, and much enhanced his popularity for the moment.' Durham hastily left the Council to give effect to the King's wishes. He found Brougham's carriage waiting at the gate of the palace, and jumping into it went off at a gallop to Lord Albemarle, the Master of the Horse. The latter was dawdling over a late breakfast, but jumped to his feet on the sudden entrance of Durham. 'You must have the King's carriages ready instantly,' exclaimed the latter. 'The King's carriages! Very well, I will just finish my breakfast.' 'Finish your breakfast!' was the quick rejoinder, 'you must not lose a moment. The King ought to be at the House.' 'Lord bless me! Is there a revolution?' said the amazed Master of the Horse. 'Not at this moment,' retorted Durham, 'but there will be if you stay to finish your breakfast.'

Lord Mansfield was on his feet talking wildly about the Ministers as members who were 'conspiring together against the safety of the State, and making the Sovereign the instrument of his own destruction,' when a great shout 'The King, the King,' arose. Durham stood on the threshold of the House, bearing the crown on its cushion, and his Majesty, walking quickly, immediately followed, and ascended the throne. He bowed to the Peers, who were now standing, and requested them to be seated until the Commons were summoned. When the latter appeared at the Bar of House, the King said, 'I have come to meet you for the purpose of proroguing this Parliament, with a view to its immediate dissolution. I have been induced to resort to this measure for the purpose of ascertaining the sense of my people, in the way in which it can be most constitutionally and most authentically expressed,

on the expediency of making such changes in the Representation as circumstances may appear to require, and which, founded upon the acknowledged principles of the Constitution, may tend at once to uphold the just rights and prerogatives of the Crown, and give security to the liberties of the people.' The Opposition had sown the wind, they were now to reap the whirlwind. But the difficulties of the Grey Cabinet both with the King and with the Lords were by no means ended.

The dissolution of Parliament was hailed with public rejoicings in all parts of the country. The people now felt no misgivings as to the issue of the struggle, and 'The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill'—a cry which Edward Ellice is believed to have originated, rang through the land. In some places the people got access to the belfries of the churches, and rang out merry peals by day, whilst at nightfall the windows were lighted up with rows of lamps and candles. The Lord Mayor sanctioned the illumination of the City, and an angry mob, oblivious for the moment of the exploits of Wellington as a soldier, showed their resentment of his action as a statesman by breaking the windows of Apsley House. Lord John Russell, in an election speech, asserted that the King, by dissolving Parliament, asked the nation to decide, once for all, whether it approved of the principle of Reform. All through the length and breadth of the kingdom his words were instantly caught up, and on hundreds of platforms the question was put, 'Reform—Aye or No?' The response in favour of the measure was decisive and overwhelming.

Even in the agricultural districts, the ascendency of the old landed families was powerless to arrest the flowing tide, and, before the elections had proceeded far, Lord Sefton summed up the situation in the dry remark, 'The county members are tumbling about like

ninepins.' In spite of rotten boroughs, unreformed corporations, the hostility of the majority of the territorial aristocracy, and the panic of thousands of timid people, who persuaded themselves that the British Constitution was imperilled, Lord Grey's position as a leader was rendered commanding by an overwhelming vote of confidence at the polls. Many who had fought the Bill tooth and nail in the late Parliament lost their seats, whilst, out of eighty-two county members who were returned, only six were avowedly hostile to the measure.

Whilst the elections proceeded, Grey's ingenuity was taxed to the utmost in attempting to allay the fears of the King that a serious collision was imminent between the Lords and the Commons, which would prove 'most prejudicial to the interests of the country,' and 'most embarrassing' to the Crown. His Majesty urged such modifications of the Bill as seemed likely to conciliate its opponents in the Upper House. Lord Grey maintained a firm attitude, and assured the King 'that no concessions that could be made, short of a total destruction of all the beneficial effects of the Bill, would satisfy those by whom it has hitherto been most violently opposed,' and no such changes would secure the object of uniting the two Houses. Durham entirely approved of Grey's answer to the King, and warmly deprecated any alterations in the Bill. 'It is useless to expect that any "improvement of the details" giving "rigour to the principles of the Bill" will conciliate its opponents. Their objections are to the extent of the principles, and not to the inefficiency of the details. If, by an alteration of the details, you modify the extent of the principles, you will then undoubtedly gain their temporary support to that particular alteration, but they will accompany it by such triumphant congratulations on

the abandonment of your measure, as will render their support infinitely more dangerous than their opposition. On the other hand, the country will see, as clearly, what the effect of the alteration in the details is, and you will lose ten times the support in the Commons that you will gain in the Lords. In addition to which, all that confidence in our firmness of purpose and determination to abide by our Bill, which now exists in the country, will be destroyed. We shall have lost the Commons and the country in the vain attempt to gain the Tory Lords, who will laugh at us for being their dupes.'

Lord John Russell, now raised to Cabinet rank, introduced on June 24 the second Reform Bill, which was substantially the same as the first. It quickly passed through its initial stages, but in committee was subjected to an irritating cross fire of obstructive criticism. At length, on September 22, the third reading was passed in the Commons by a majority of 109.

All through the anxious weeks of that summer of fierce political unrest, Durham, when not with his colleagues in Downing Street, was at Marine Square, Brighton, where his eldest son was slowly dying of consumption. Some of the letters which Lady Durham wrote from day to day to her husband in Cleveland Row still exist, and, in pathetic fashion reveal, not only the love and sorrow of the moment, but the fortitude of the young sufferer himself. The 'blow' fell on September 24, and Lord Durham for a time was almost beside himself with grief. Even a woman of the world like the Princess Lieven recognised that the death of such a child was nothing short of a personal calamity, especially to a man like Durham, whose hopes were bound up in the boy, who conquered all hearts by his winning qualities, no less than his personal beauty. 'That charming little Lambton was the pet of everyone,'

wrote the Princess to Lord Grey; 'I cannot tell you how grieved I feel and how deeply I sympathise with the sorrow this must have caused you.'[1]

Lord Grey hastened to Brighton, and declared that the first interview with his daughter and Durham was so painful, that he should never forget it as long as he lived. He described it as a 'blow not to be recovered,' and added, 'Why did it fall on this heavenly boy, whilst I and so many others, who would be no loss to the world, are spared? I can think of nothing else, and am quite unnerved for the battle I have to fight.' A day or two later he wrote again. 'I am very well in health, but I cannot shake off this dreadful affliction. Every time I see my poor daughter renews it. There is in her countenance a sweet and affectionate expression of meekness and resignation, with a look of inexpressible anguish which breaks my heart. Poor Lambton, too, is very bad.' Lord Grey felt the death of his grandson and namesake so keenly, that he was unable to attend more than one important meeting of the Cabinet, whilst Durham's grief was terrible to witness. He was subject all his life to neuralgic attacks in the head, and his letters show that, under this sorrow, his sufferings were cruel. He declared that 'he was wretched beyond description,' and his condition was at the moment so alarming that he was persuaded, though with the utmost difficulty, not to attempt the long journey by coach, inseparable from the funeral at Lambton.

It was to his brother Hedworth, to whom he was warmly attached, that he turned in his extremity, and his brother, and his uncle, Mr. Ralph Lambton, were the chief mourners at the grave, when all that was mortal of the Hon. Charles William Lambton were placed in the family vault at Chester-le-Street on

[1] Letters of Princess Lieven.

October 6. The whole country-side seemed to be present at that funeral, and it was said at the time that it seemed as if everyone present had suffered personal loss. The boy was universally beloved by all the tenantry and workpeople, and, apart from the mourning coaches, 200 gentlemen of the neighbourhood followed on horseback and in upwards of fifty carriages, whilst no less than 10,000 people, gathered from Newcastle, Sunderland, Durham, and the surrounding villages, were present at the grave. Such a tribute, to one who was little more than a child, revealed the respect with which Lord Durham and the family at Lambton were regarded by the people at their own doors.

CHAPTER XI

REFORM TRIUMPHANT

The Atlantic was roused. Mrs. Partington's spirit was up. But I need not tell you that the contest was unequal. The Atlantic Ocean beat Mrs. Partington. She was excellent at a slop or a puddle, but she should not have meddled with a tempest.

Sydney Smith.

1831–1832

Rejection of the Bill by the Lords—Durham's visit to King Leopold—Provincial riots—Sydney Smith's speech at Taunton on the creation of additional peers—The Reform Bill introduced for the third time, and passed by the Commons—Durham contemplates resignation—Reception of the Bill in the Lords, and Durham's speech—Jeffrey's description of the scene in the Lords—Attempt of the Lords to destroy the Bill in Committee—Resignation of Grey—Lord Ebrington's motion—Wellington's failure to form a Ministry—Grote on the Crisis—The King's unpopularity—Re-appointment of Grey as Prime Minister—Durham on the enfranchisement of Metropolitan Districts—The Reform Bill becomes law—Immediate results of the measure—Dawn of a new era.

MEANWHILE, the Reform Bill was before the House of Lords, and whilst the funeral cortège of his favourite grandchild was slowly making its way to the north, Lord Grey, on October 3, moved the second reading in one of the most memorable speeches ever delivered in that assembly. He spoke of the gravity of the political situation, the magnitude of the interests involved, and laid stress on the need of setting aside everything except the welfare of the nation. In a modest passing allusion, he referred to his own life-long association with the question at issue. 'In 1786 I voted for Reform. I supported Mr. Pitt in his motion for shortening the duration of Parliament. I gave my best assistance to the measure of Reform introduced by Mr. Flood before the French Revolution. On one or

two occasions I originated motions on the subject.' He drew attention to the stormy restlessness which prevailed in the country, to the 'nightly alarms and popular disturbances,' to the distress in the manufacturing districts, and the growth of political associations which that distress had rendered formidable. He contended that the measure was not revolutionary in spirit, and it was idle to talk of it as subversive of the British Constitution. On the contrary, there was nothing in its proposed enactments that might not be adopted with absolute safety. He gave a scathing description of the rotten boroughs, and declared that the gangrene which had attacked the representative system 'bade defiance to all remedies but that of excision.' The debate lasted a week, and in its course Brougham, on the testimony of Lord John Russell, and indeed of all who heard him, excelled himself in powerful philippic. But argument and invective were alike in vain. The House of Lords, on October 8, at twenty minutes past six on Saturday morning, threw out the Bill by a majority of forty-one, in which majority were twenty-one bishops.

Brougham wrote instantly to Durham to tell him the result. 'I want to let you know how your favourite measure stands. I have done my endeavour —indeed I never exerted myself more, and am very much knocked up. Lord Grey exceeded himself. I never heard anything like his reply—his opening speech having been first-rate too. The bishops have done for themselves, and that they begin to feel already. They won't vote on many more Bills.' Brougham was a false prophet. The Lords Spiritual still possess the power they used so badly at that crisis. The influence of Queen Adelaide was supposed to have turned the scale, and Brougham went on to say that the whole town 'rings with indignation' in consequence, and that the only thing that keeps the peace is the

knowledge that the Grey Ministry is still in power. He makes it plain that no alternative government can be formed, and ends his allusion to the crisis with the significant words, 'the King must do his duty.' But the letter is not all on public affairs, for Brougham knew only too well the dark cloud of sorrow which had fallen on his colleague. 'I have really abstained from writing because I had nothing to say that could comfort either you or Lady Durham. I know it is impossible, and that certainly does not make me feel less for you both, but especially for you, because women have more fortitude at first, and they are, for a while, less knocked down by such calamities.'

A few days later, Brougham wrote to Durham, announcing the publication of his Reform speech, which was circulated through the length and breadth of the country, and which he proposed to dedicate to Lord Durham. He took the opportunity of urging him, in the interest of his health, to seek an entire change of scene, a course upon which Grey was not less insistent. Durham's tendency was always to withdraw into strict seclusion in moments of great sorrow, and he more than once did himself serious harm by falling back upon solitude that was filled with unavailing regrets. Happily, at this juncture, an invitation from King Leopold solved the difficulty. His Majesty, after expressing deep concern for Durham's health, begged 'the truest friend he had' to pay him a visit at once, assuring him that the change of air and scene would have a favourable effect.

Lord Durham's reply was as follows:

'Sudbrook Park: October 23.

'Sir,—I feel most grateful to your Majesty for your kind and gracious letter which I received last night. As your Majesty too truly observes, none but those

who have experienced similar calamities know how severe is the blow which at once lacerates our warmest affections and destroys our dearest hopes. Did not a sense of duty towards those who are spared urge me to repress the feelings of my heart, I should court the hour which removed me from this world. As it is, I must struggle against myself for their sakes. I feel undoubtedly that change of scene is absolutely essential to me, and I had consented to undertake a short tour in this country for that purpose. Your Majesty's most kind proposal and invitation, however, induces me to alter my plans. I will come to Brussels, and if the result of my visit proves of the slightest advantage to your Majesty, I should feel what little consolation my present circumstances would admit of. To few in this world do I entertain the same feelings of attachment as to your Majesty, and there is no effort or exertion of mine which I would not cheerfully make in your Majesty's service. I will to-day mention the subject to Lord Grey, and if no difficulties present themselves, I should set off about the 26th or 27th.

'I am, Sir, yours obediently,

'DURHAM.'

The Privy Seal, by the King's command, was entrusted to Lord Grey during Lord Durham's absence on the Continent. He was accompanied by Lady Durham, and remained in Brussels ten days. The King took the opportunity to consult him about the new Belgian Constitution, for, as he playfully put it, the English statesman had already had a good deal to do in that direction. He was eager to hear from Durham's lips the inner history of the struggle for Reform in England, a subject in which he was keenly interested. After leaving Belgium, Lord and Lady Durham visited

Lord Granville at the British Embassy at Paris, a visit which was cut short by the deadlock which in the meantime had arisen between William IV. and his Ministers, and the alternative which presented itself—Reform or Revolution.

Durham knew better than Lord Grey what was the actual condition of the country. He was in close touch—a mass of letters show it—with the leaders of the Radical party in all the great towns, and, in consequence, was in a position to estimate more accurately than anyone else the peril of the situation. The riots at Bristol, Nottingham, Birmingham, and other great towns showed the necessity of taking strong measures, once for all, and the political unions which had arisen, as if by magic, in every part of the land made it plain that the people were prepared for a struggle *à toute outrance* with the Peers. The question was no longer, 'What will the Lords do?' but 'What shall be done with the Lords?' 'The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill' was on everyone's lips, and only the fact that men like Grey, Durham, Althorp, and Russell were still at the helm kept the agitation within reasonable bounds. Several of the leading Liberal newspapers appeared in deep mourning, and even in places where actual disturbances did not occur muffled bells were rung from the churches.

Durham's old friend, Sydney Smith, an incomparable master of ridicule, did yeoman's service at this crisis by a speech at Taunton, in which he compared the efforts of the House of Lords to restrain the rising tide of democracy with the ludicrous endeavour of Dame Partington, with her mop, to sweep back the waves of the Atlantic from her door. That unconventional cleric declared that, as a clergyman, he blushed to find so many dignitaries of the Church arrayed against the wishes of the people. He comforted himself, however,

that, in spite of the opposition of the Lords, Temporal and Spiritual, the Bill would pass in the course of a few months, just as certainly as the annual taxes would be collected. He had no doubt, either then or afterwards, of a triumphant issue. 'I see an open sea beyond the icebergs.'

Durham's temper, whilst the icebergs blocked the way, was none of the best. Beyond all else, he was a patriot, and he feared that the vacillating element in the Cabinet would prevail. 'I see what Palmerston is driving at,' he said in a letter to Lord Grey; 'he does not mind the disfranchisement of rotten boroughs, or the enfranchisement of great towns, provided he can get such an elective qualification as will make those large towns as little real representations of the people as the boroughs he has destroyed. And as a thorough anti-reformer (which he is) he is right. In my mind the whole question of Reform being a benefit or a curse turns on the elective qualification being as extensive, at least, as we made it in the first Bill. (In my own opinion all householders ought to vote, whether paying 10*l.* or ten shillings.) Don't imagine the people will care one farthing for your new Bill if they are not to have the right of voting extended to them as largely as in the last Bill. I mention this because I see the cloven foot in Palmerston's letter very plainly, and you will have the same difficulties to contend with over again.'

Durham saw clearly enough that nothing short of the threat to create a batch of peers, sufficient to turn the scale, was of the least avail; but to this course Lord Grey was for a time resolutely opposed. Meanwhile, the situation in the country grew more and more alarming, and Durham was bombarded on all sides by energetic protests from responsible men in the provinces, at their wits' end to control the angry demands of the supporters of the Government. Lord Grey's temporising

mood exasperated him, and, at a Cabinet meeting at Lord Althorp's house, he entirely lost his temper. Greville has described the scene in a passage in his 'Memoirs,' which has only been too freely quoted, but there is good reason to believe that his account of what happened is, to say the least, exaggerated. Durham, whose nerves were unstrung by his recent personal affliction, as well as by his knowledge of all that was happening in the provinces, did not mince his words, and, as a matter of fact, spoke hotly. But it is difficult to believe that he gave Lord Grey any serious ground for complaint. The latter knew him too well—in his strength no less than in his weakness—not to make allowance for a momentary loss of self-control over a question, which both men felt to be of vital significance to the welfare of the country.

Durham possessed, beyond any other member of the Grey Cabinet, imagination and courage, and he saw clearly that safety lay in a bold course. He knew the temper of the Peers, the intrigues of the Court, the dull apathy of the landed interest, and all the subtle forces in society which were in conspiracy against the just demands of the people. He knew also, for he had taken infinite pains to make himself acquainted with it, the actual trend of public opinion, and saw clearly that it was useless, as well as unjust, to attempt anything in the nature of a compromise. It was this which prompted him, when the crisis grew even more acute, to write the following letter to Lord Grey, which clearly states, with abundant common sense, his reasons for believing that only in one way was it possible for the Government to cut the Gordian knot.

'Sudbrook Park: December 29, 1831.

'My dear Lord Grey,—I feel it incumbent on me no longer to delay declaring to you my decided opinion,

that the Government ought to advise the King to create a sufficient number of peers to ensure the passing of the Reform Bill. I conceive that, not only were we pledged to the country to propose a measure of Reform as extensive as the last, but, as a necessary consequence, are bound to take every means in our power to further the passing of that measure in the same form as that in which we introduced it, as to extent and efficiency.

'To consent to, or connive at, any other course of proceeding would not only be a breach of our pledges, but a gross act of duplicity. It would be mockery to carry the Bill through all its stages in the Commons by large and increasing majorities—resisting there every attempt to impair its efficiency or modify its provisions—and then propose it for a second reading in the Lords with the probability of being again defeated, but at any rate with certainty that we shall be so weak in the committee, as to be unable to resist not only those alterations which we had successfully defeated in the Commons, but also additional encroachments on the efficiency of the Bill, which would no longer enable us to assert that the principle of the measure had been maintained.

'Then also would come the great responsibility of deciding whether we should propose to the Commons an acquiescence in the mutilated Bill, or its total rejection, in consequence of its being no longer the same measure which we had recommended to the King and proposed to Parliament.

'I say, therefore, that the adoption of those means, which are necessary to ensure to us a majority in the committee, as well as on the second reading, is absolutely essential to the honest redemption of our pledges to the country—pledges which, I repeat, are not merely limited to the introduction of the Bill, but must extend

to and affect every stage of it until it has received the Royal assent.

'To ensure that successful issue, we have already the King's approbation, and a declared and overwhelming majority in the Commons. Our weakness lies in the other branch of the Legislature. There we were defeated, and there again consists the danger. It is now, I believe, admitted that all hopes of conversions sufficient to enable us to carry even the second reading are abandoned—and even the few conversions which are expected no one asserts will be the slightest advantage to us in the committee. We may therefore fairly anticipate that we shall find a majority of 20 against the Bill on the second reading—unless it is suffered to go into the committee without a division, for the purpose of more quietly destroying it there—in which case we should then, as before, be met by the original majority of forty, if not more, on all questions affecting the vital parts of the measure.

'Are we then prepared to carry the Bill into the House of Lords in these circumstances, knowing, as we must do, that its rejection or mutilation is thus inevitable? Ignorance of these facts, and their consequences, we cannot plead, and indeed they are not only notorious to ourselves but are the subject of general remark and discussion.

'If we are not prepared to pursue this line of conduct—as I trust we are not—there is but one other to adopt, namely, a large creation of peers.

'To this proceeding several objections have been stated, to which I shall now call your attention.

'(1) It is asserted that the carrying the measure by such means is unconstitutional.

'This I deny—I believe it to be in accordance with the best principles of the Constitution. The King's power of creating peers is unlimited and undeniable.

In the exercise of that privilege he is absolute, and uncontrolled by the forms of the Constitution—it can then only be the motives which are supposed to influence that exercise, and the effects which follow it, which can be impugned as unconstitutional. Prerogative is defined to consist in the discretionary power of acting for the public good, when the positive laws are silent. If that discretionary power be abused to the public detriment, the prerogative is exerted in an unconstitutional manner.

'If, on the other hand, it is called forth for the public advantage and the safety of the State, it is as wise and just as it is constitutional.

'How then, tried by this test, does the present case stand? The King has recommended, the House of Commons has adopted, and the country sanctioned a measure, which the House of Lords alone seems determined to reject.

'That harmony which therefore ought to exist between the three branches of the Legislature is interrupted, and the confidence and attachment of the people is shaken. This cannot be remedied by an acquiescence in the objections of the one opposing branch—the utmost that would be attained thereby would be delay, attended, necessarily, by incessant irritation. The other alternative therefore remains, to which I have before adverted, and the adoption of which, in order to produce that harmony in the three powers of the State, by the exercise of a recognised admitted prerogative, can be no violation of the Constitution, but is in strict accordance with its fundamental principles.

'If indeed the case were different, and the King were advised to create peers for the purpose of defeating the declared wishes of the Commons and the country, and the ascertained intentions of the Lords,

not only an unconstitutional, but an unnecessary act would be counselled; unconstitutional because perpetuating dissensions between the two Houses, but unnecessary because the same object would be attained by a refusal of the Royal assent.

'(2) It is said that the House of Lords would be destroyed by such an increase of its numbers.

'To that I answer, that by calling up the eldest sons of peers we shall not eventually increase its numbers to any great amount—but even if we did I apprehend no danger from the House consisting of 458, or even 500, instead of 418 members.

'Neither its votes nor its deliberations would be deteriorated by the accession of talent, property, and liberality of opinions. On the contrary, the creations made under the Pitt system render such an adjustment of the balance absolutely necessary, not only for the carrying this particular measure, but for the support of those principles of freedom and constitutional government, without a strict adherence to which no administration can now pretend to acquire or retain the confidence of the King or the people. As at present constituted, it is evident that the House of Lords is not in unison with the spirit of the age—it is opposed to the King and the people. Hence arises on the part of the latter complaints—discontent—and doubts openly expressed whether its existence is not incompatible with the happiness and welfare of the country. To check at once these opinions, and to remove these doubts by enabling the House to assume an attitude more in consonance with the general feeling, would be surely an act tending not to its destruction, but to its preservation.

'(3) It is feared that a creation would not answer the purpose we have in view—because so many peers, friends to Reform, would be disgusted at the addition

to their numbers that they would be impelled to oppose the Bill. I cannot believe that such would be the case, because until I witness the fact I cannot imagine that any peer having voted for the last Reform Bill, on the ground of its being a measure essential to the prosperity of the country and safety of the State, would vote against a similar Bill now, solely because to him had been added a sufficient number of colleagues to prevent his vote from being a second time rendered useless and inefficient.

'Besides, he would be aware that no vote of his against the Bill would remedy the evil of which he complained; his change would therefore be useless as far as regarded the creation of peers, and most mischievous in respect to the consequences, which he must be conscious would follow a second rejection of the Reform Bill—any desertion therefore of the Bill by Reformers on account of a creation would be so notorious a violation of principle, without the slightest consequent advantage, that I cannot believe it possible.

'For these reasons, and on these grounds, I have formed the opinion which I announced to you at the commencement of this communication, and I cannot conclude without declaring my conviction, that on the adoption of this measure depends not only the character of the administration, but the preservation of the country from civil commotions of the most alarming and dangerous nature.

'Yours etc., etc.,

'DURHAM.'

Lord Grey was difficult to move. He was reluctant to take so extreme a step, and declared, somewhat curtly, that he knew what he was about. Lansdowne, Palmerston, Melbourne, and Stanley had to be considered, and they were men who moved slowly.

There were two voices in the Cabinet, and that which urged caution for the moment prevailed. The King's zeal for Reform had cooled. He was surrounded by people who did their best to fan his apprehensions, and the Queen was actively hostile to the Bill. The Duke of Wellington, who was a *persona grata* with Her Majesty, played upon her fears. He drew the King's attention to the threats of the political unions, and worked upon his fears to such an extent that Lord Grey's difficulties were increased tenfold.

Meanwhile, the Reform Bill, which Lord John Russell had introduced on December 12 for the third time in twelve months, had passed its second reading in the Commons before the Christmas recess. Its proposals were substantially the same, though a few alterations, rendered necessary by the statistics of the census taken in the summer, had been made. In January 1832 the House went into committee on the Bill, and after protracted discussions the third reading took place on March 23, when the Bill was passed by the substantial majority of 116. It was promptly sent up to the Lords, and in the debate over the second reading the Duke of Wellington had the bad taste to drag the King's name into the discussion. He declared that he was confident that if his Majesty's real sentiments were made known to the country, Lord Grey would be powerless to pass such a measure. Before the Bill came up for second reading in the Lords, Lord Althorp, who had more influence with Lord Grey than any other member of the Cabinet, had been won over to Durham's view, that the moment had come for a large creation of peers. He reminded the Premier of a conversation which had taken place between them in the summer of 1830, in which he had said that nothing on earth would induce him to take office, except Grey's declaration that otherwise he would decline the task of forming an Administration. Althorp

now told Lord Grey that he was persuaded that the chances of carrying the Bill without a large creation of peers seemed to him remote, and he made it plain that he deemed it a needless hazard to defer such a step, since the difficulty of creating peers subsequent to the second reading seemed to him quite as great as the taking of such a step at once. He added that, if he did not think such a step would hopelessly discredit the Administration, he would resign. Lord Grey replied that he regarded the creation of peers as a measure of extreme violence, and made no secret of his own opinion that it should only be regarded as a last resort. He hinted that the consequence of Althorp's resignation would be the immediate collapse of the Government. On the other hand, nothing would induce him, as at present advised, to be a consenting party to a proposal which he regarded with repugnance.

Durham, at the same time, assured Lord Grey that he regarded the matter as vital. He did not believe in the probability of a majority on the second reading in the Lords, and he felt that, even if it was secured, it could only be obtained by the votes of men who were determined to mutilate the measure in committee. At a Cabinet meeting on March 11, when the subject was under discussion, he moved a resolution to this effect, but not one of his colleagues supported him. Brougham was absent through ill-health, and Althorp, though of the same opinion, would do nothing in opposition to Lord Grey. Durham left the Cabinet with the intention of taking, as he said, the only step which was left to him, that of resignation, but Althorp told him that such a step would be most prejudicial to the Government. He replied that as he did not hold any prominent office he failed to see that his own retirement would have the effect which his colleague predicted. Althorp still persisted in his view that Durham's retirement would

probably break up the Administration, an event which the latter declared he should greatly lament.

So the matter was left for the moment, but next day Durham was assured that his own resignation would be immediately followed by that of one of the most prominent members of the Cabinet, and he therefore, after explaining his views of the situation, said to Lord Grey in a letter from Cleveland Row, dated March 12, 1832: 'In this state of things I feel myself bound to sacrifice my own feelings, and refrain from adopting that course which would be naturally expected from me after the decision of yesterday. I cannot tender a resignation which is to be followed by the destruction of your Administration. On every ground of public and private feeling, I shrink from such a proceeding, and I therefore content myself with having offered the most strenuous opposition in my power to that decision of the Cabinet, which, in my conscience, I believe will produce consequences fatal to the success of the Reform Bill and the tranquillity of the country.'

Durham's fears — they were fully shared by the country—about the second reading were falsified by the action, at the last moment, of the 'Waverers.' It is certain that if he and one or more of his colleagues had resigned at that moment, the Ministry could not have survived. The first to congratulate him on his decision was Lord John Russell, who wrote: 'I entirely approve of your determination. My own opinion still is that your secession at this juncture must have been fatal to us in the public mind, and I rejoice that we keep together.' Durham has been accused, so often, and with justice, of impulsiveness, that his attitude at so great a crisis should be placed to his credit. The safety of the Reform Bill lay very near his heart, and he was determined that no personal consideration must imperil it.

Durham's speech on the second reading of the Reform Bill, on April 13, was memorable. The Duke of Wellington, in the course of the debate, had declared that the demand for Reform was of recent growth, and was in fact the outcome of the French and Belgian revolutions of 1830. Durham had no difficulty, of course, in showing that such an assertion was entirely unfounded. He declared that if there was one subject more than another which had been discussed both in and out of Parliament, especially within the last half century, it was this very question. It had been advocated by the most eminent men in the country, and had never been lost sight of by the people. It was brought before the notice of Parliament by the Duke of Richmond in 1780, by Pitt on three distinct occasions between 1782–1784, and subsequently by Lord Grey, Sir Francis Burdett and others. He admitted that the question had assumed a much more formidable shape within the last four or five years, but the reasons for that were to be found much nearer home than in either Belgium or France.

'In my opinion it has been owing, in a great measure, to the repeated refusals of your Lordships to grant representation to the great towns of Leeds, Manchester, and Birmingham, when fitting opportunities were afforded you. It has also arisen from the exposures which took place in the Parliamentary inquiries relative to Grampound, Penryn, and East Retford, laying bare scenes of the grossest political profligacy and corruption. Above all, my Lords, it has been in consequence of the great mass of the middle classes having at length identified themselves with this question.' After lightly sketching the constitutional struggles which had taken place since the Revolution of 1688, Durham said that the people, conscious of their own lack of education, had for a long time acquiesced in the supremacy of the

higher orders and even in their exclusive possession of political privileges. Then coming to close quarters with the existing situation, he laid stress on the vast social changes which had taken place within the last fifty years. 'The two extremes have been gradually meeting—the one standing still whilst the other has been gradually improving.'

He contended that the middle classes had increased within that period alike in political intelligence and wealth, to such an extent that they justly felt that they had a right to a fair share of political power. Their wealth was nearly treble that of the higher orders, and as for their intelligence, a glance at the great centres of population, London, Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Liverpool, Newcastle, Glasgow, and many other places, was enough to reveal that the scientific institutions, the literary societies, the charities, in short all associations for the amelioration of society, were controlled and maintained by them. The landed gentry, living apart in the country, enjoyed the luxuries and amusements peculiar to their class, but they mixed neither in the pursuits nor relaxations of their neighbours in the towns. Whenever such people were brought together, in public meetings on political questions, with the middle classes of the towns, their superiority in learning or intellect was no longer manifest —in fact, the advantage was the other way.

'This being the case, the question is naturally asked, Is that a fit and proper state of the Constitution which excludes from the enjoyment of political power and privileges a large body of men possessed of talents, skill, and wealth, merely because they do not happen to be included in a particular class, endowed with privileges bestowed upon them in different times and under different circumstances?' He went on to show that the question was not one merely of representation,

but of expenditure. The people asserted that the present exclusive system did not work advantageously to the country as a whole. 'I can accumulate proof upon proof of the correctness of this assertion—a few will suffice. It appears that when this corrupt Parliamentary system first came into operation—I mean shortly after the Revolution—the national debt amounted to 16,000,000*l.* sterling; at the end of the last war in 1814 it had risen to very nearly 800,000,000*l.* The national expenditure had increased during that time from 5,600,000*l.* to more than 94,000,000*l.*, the poor rates from 1,000,000*l.* to 7,000,000*l.* In one reign alone, that of George III., 27,000,000*l.* were lavished in subsidies to all the great Powers of the Continent. In the same period the naval and military expenditure amounted to 928,000,000*l.*—that is to say, the luxury of indulging in war cost this country a sum little less than one thousand millions.

'All these proofs of an unlimited and unchecked expenditure, and many others which I need not now detail, became known to the people at the conclusion of the war. Great distress followed, much discontent and loud complaints prevailed. How were they met? By conciliation or concession? No—by every species of repressive and coercive enactment. Measures for preventing public meetings and petitioning, for fettering the press, for suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, for granting Indemnity Bills, were successively proposed to the House of Commons and immediately adopted by that assembly. These proceedings seem, if I may judge by their cheers, to be approved of by the noble Lords opposite; they were not grateful to the people, I can assure them, who, seeing their liberties attacked and their resources squandered through the instrumentality of a House of Commons, theoretically the guardian of both, naturally directed their attention to the mode in

which that House was chosen, which neither represented their feelings nor protected their interests.

'The picture which was then presented to them was no less startling and disquieting than that of the state of their finances, to which I have just alluded. They found one portion nominated by peers, a second by commoners, a third by trafficking attorneys selling seats to the highest bidder, a fourth owing its return to the most unblushing bribery and corruption. They found in one part of the kingdom a park with no population at all, or at least of the smallest kind, returning two members; in another, a large and important town with hundreds of thousands of inhabitants, with no representation at all. They found even that small part of the House which was still dependent on the public voice so fettered and circumscribed by the immense expenditure required, as to be virtually placed in the hands of a very small class.'

He went on to ask if history was to be for ever a sealed book to the House of Lords. Did its pages not teem with instances of the folly and uselessness of resistance to popular rights? 'My Lords, I assert that the Revolution of 1641, the French Revolution of 1789, the Separation of the North American Colonies might all have been averted by timely and wise concession. Can any man with the slightest knowledge of history attempt to persuade me that if Charles I., after conceding the Petition of Rights, had kept his faith with his people he would not have saved his crown and his life. Again, with reference to the French Revolution, I say, that if Louis XVI. had adopted the advice given by his Ministers, the people would have been satisfied, the ancient institutions of the country ameliorated, the altar, the throne, and the aristocracy preserved from the horrible fate which afterwards befell them. Twice had Louis XVI. opportunities—first under Turgot's Ministry, secondly under Necker's—of conciliating the

country, and averting that fatal catastrophe by limited concessions. The nobility resisted, and the Revolution followed. I need only add my conviction that if, after the Repeal of the Stamp Act, England had not destroyed all the benefit of that concession by the Declaratory Act and the re-imposition of the Tea Duties, North America would at this hour have been a portion of the British Empire.'

He went on to show that the course of events had always been the same. First, unreasoning opposition to popular demands; next, bloody and protracted struggles; finally, but invariably, unlimited and ignominious concessions. Some members of that House talked of resistance, but had they calculated the relative forces arrayed on either side? On one side were about two hundred peers, a narrow majority, at the best, of that assembly; on the other side was the Crown, the House of Commons, and the people. 'Now, my Lords, supposing that you reject this Bill a second time, and supposing that the people acquiesce quietly in your decision, and that their feelings of disappointment do not break out in open tumult and violence, will there be no punishment in the utter separation which must take place between you and your fellow countrymen? My Lords, I fear the change between confidence and distrust, affection and hatred will be so great, that the satisfaction of having preferred nomination boroughs for a time will ill console you for the annoyances and expressions of dislike and aversion which will be heaped on you on all sides.' After further detailed references to the practical working of the measure, Lord Durham made his final appeal: 'For all these reasons, my Lords, I implore you to consent to the second reading of the Bill, the object of which is to give security to the Throne, contentment to the people, and permanence to the best institutions of the country.'

The speech made a great impression, even in the House of Lords, where it undoubtedly opened the eyes of some of the vacillating peers to the gravity of the crisis. The enthusiasm which it created in the country was deep and widespread. The Government were aware, however, that the real struggle would be in committee, and therefore they were not elated when the second reading was carried on April 14 by the narrow majority of nine, a victory which was only won by the adhesion at the last moment of the 'Waverers,' a group of Tory peers led by Lords Hardwicke and Harrowby.

The scene in the Lords is thus described by Francis Jeffrey, who was then a member of Parliament. 'You will see we had a majority of nine, being one more than anybody can account for. The debate, in its latter stage, got excessively interesting. Lyndhurst's by far the cleverest and most dangerous speech against us in debate, and very well spoken. Grey's reply on the whole admirable; in tone and spirit perfect, and, considering his age and the time, really astonishing. He spoke near an hour and a half, after five o'clock, from the kindling dawn into full sunlight, and I think with great effect. The aspect of the House was very striking through the whole night, very full, and on the whole still and solemn. The throne and the space around it clustered over with a hundred members of our House, and the space below the bar nearly filled with two hundred more, ranged in a standing row of three deep along the bar; another sitting on the ground against the wall, and the space between covered with moving and sitting figures in all directions, with twenty or thirty clambering on the railings and perched up by the doorways. Between four and five o'clock, when the daylight began to shed its blue beams across the red candle-light, the scene was very picturesque, from the singular grouping of forty or fifty of us

sprawling on the floor, awake and asleep, in all imaginable attitudes, and with all sorts of expressions and wrappings. The candles had been renewed before dawn, and blazed on after the sun came fairly in at the high windows.'

Meanwhile the King's fears had increased, and the majority of the people about the Court did their best, by wild talk about the violent language of the political unions, to increase his misgivings. It was in such circumstances that the measure reached the committee stage on May 7, when it quickly became apparent that the Tories were determined to destroy the scheme piecemeal. Lord Lyndhurst led the attack with a motion, proposing that the consideration of the disannulling clauses should be postponed until that part of the measure which referred to an extension of the franchise had been considered. The 'Waverers' announced that they would support him. Lord Grey declared that if Lord Lyndhurst's motion was adopted, it would be impossible to carry the Bill. This was, of course, what the Tories wanted, and the motion was pushed to a division, and carried by a majority of thirty-five. Lord Grey at once moved the adjournment of the House, and the country stood on the brink of revolution.

There is no need to describe once more in detail the most dramatic incident in the reign of William IV. Ministers determined, in Lord Durham's words, that a 'sufficient creation of peers was absolutely necessary,' if their resignation was not to take immediate effect, and they promptly submitted their decision to the King. William IV. lived in a narrow world, and was surrounded by courtiers and gossips who played upon his fears of revolution, and did their best to fortify his prejudices. His enthusiasm for the measure—it had never been other than languid—had perceptibly cooled,

and Queen Adelaide was openly hostile. The result was that when Grey and Brougham went down to Windsor on the day after the debate, with a Cabinet minute signed by all the members, except the Duke of Richmond, advising the King to create fifty peers, they met with a chilling reception. The King gave no definite answer at the moment, but the next day accepted Lord Grey's resignation, an alternative which had been clearly placed before him. It was significant of the change in the King's attitude towards the question that Lord Lyndhurst, whose motion had brought about the crisis, was the first statesman with whom he took counsel, and the outcome was that the Duke of Wellington was summoned. Wellington now knew perfectly well how wide and deep-seated was the indignation of the country, and he was also alive to the opprobrium which his own hostility to the measure had evoked. He thought that Peel ought to be at the head of the new Administration, but the latter was too politic, and declined the task.

Meanwhile, the House of Commons, at the instance of Lord Ebrington, passed a vote of confidence in Lord Grey and his colleagues, and adopted an address to His Majesty, begging him to call to his Councils such persons only as were likely to 'carry into effect, unimpaired in all its essential provisions, that Bill for reforming the representation of the people which has recently passed this House.' Wellington in the interval, in submission to the King's commands, attempted to form a Ministry to carry out some emasculated and shadowy scheme of Reform, but Peel's refusal to have part or lot in the proposed Administration rendered his task hopeless. Durham was fully aware of the gravity of the crisis, and, if he had not been, the letters which poured in upon him from all parts of the kingdom, and addressed to him, as the most Radical mem-

ber of the Cabinet, would have opened his eyes to the fact that the stability of the Crown was itself imperilled. The following letter from George Grote, dated May 19, 1832, may be taken as a specimen of scores of communications received from Radical correspondents:

'My Lord,—I make little apology for troubling your Lordship with a second note, as I feel that the present position of public affairs, coupled with the proceedings last night in the House of Peers, makes it almost a duty for me to do so.

'I read with very peculiar delight the declaration so unequivocally made by Lord Grey, that he now saw the way clear before him to the passing of the entire Reform Bill. Such an assurance from Lord Grey will diffuse universal gratification. But I greatly fear that, on a second consideration of the subject, sincere Reformers will see that there is still much room for disquietude and apprehension. The resistance to the Bill in the Lords, so far as obvious appearances indicate, is not one jot mitigated in intensity and rancour; it is hardly at all diminished in point of number, for Lord Harewood seems as yet the only pledged seceder. What is still more, the tenor of the speeches of noble peers distinctly implies that there can have been *no tacit understanding* between the two parties; it also proves that the opposition peers *do not know* that the power of new creation is positively and peremptorily lodged with the Ministry. Looking at the matter therefore in the way that the public look at it, and with no other information than that which the public possess, it seems absolutely certain that nothing but an infusion of new peers can carry the Bill, but it seems by no means absolutely certain that Lord Grey has any power of making the new peers confided to him without condition or reserve. Your Lordship will therefore

see that reflecting men cannot feel altogether easy respecting the entire Bill, when they perceive that the enemy's walls are as strongly defended as before, and that no heavier guns are brought up to assail them than such as have before been proved to be insufficient.

'I would fain hope that you are possessed of information which would at once remove all these apprehensions, and if there are any secret facts of that important character, I am far from seeking to pry into them. But I am very anxious to impress upon your Lordship the light in which your present position will be viewed by the general public—by those who know no more than I know now. Whatever joy they may experience on the first reading of Lord Grey's declaration, they can hardly avoid being assailed on further reflection with very serious mistrust as to your real power of carrying the declaration into effect.

'If ultimately all things turn out right, and the Bill should be carried entire without any creation of peers, everybody will of course be satisfied. But if the Tories should be able to play off any successful stratagem—if they lie in ambuscade during the time that the van and the main body of the Bill are passing, and then suddenly come out to overwhelm the rear—you will be placed in a far less commanding position than you are now. You will either be forced to make peers to preserve the last limbs of the Bill, which will be regarded as much less justifiable than making peers to carry through the Bill as a whole from the beginning, or you will be forced to abandon the last limbs of the Bill to their fate, from the power of creating peers being denied in the last emergency, as it has now been. Should the last alternative ensue, the public will not forgive you, and I am sure you will not forgive yourselves, for having thrown away the splendid position which you now occupy.

'Ignorant as I am of all facts except those which

are obvious to the public, it would, of course, be presumptuous in me to offer any suggestions at all. One thing, however, I shall add. If circumstances are to remain as they are at present—if the public are to possess no more distinct and special knowledge, whether Lord Grey can create peers or not, than they possess at present—then the necessity of hastening the progress of the Bill becomes more urgent than ever. Had peers been actually created, the public would have awaited patiently the result of a protracted committee, assured, as they then would be, about the final result. But if, without new peers, the committee is stormy and protracted, mistrust and suspicion will become more aggravated than ever, and the Unions will continue to be quite as active, daring, and formidable as they are at present. Therefore, if the attempt is really to be made to get the Bill through without new peers, celerity is absolutely indispensable.

'I trust your Lordship will excuse the length of this communication, which I have worded with perfect frankness, not without hope that it would be more acceptable to you on that account.

'I have the honour to remain, my Lord,

'Your obedient humble servant,

'GEO. GROTE.'

The King seemed to have forfeited his popularity as if by magic, and the people, in their bitter disillusionment, were prepared to go almost any lengths—even to that of armed resistance—rather than submit to the contemptuous refusal of their just demands. William IV. was hissed as he passed through the streets, and the walls were placarded with insulting lampoons and caricatures. Sign-boards which displayed the King's portrait were edged with crêpe, and those which bore the portrait of the Queen were disfigured with lampblack.

Riots occurred in many towns, and whispers of a plot for seizing the wives and children of the aristocracy led the authorities to order the swords of the Scots Greys to be rough sharpened. It will probably never be known how near the country came at that moment to the brink of a catastrophe which would have overturned both law and order.

At the last moment the King yielded. Exactly ten days after the defeat of the Government he sent for Lord Grey. 'Only think,' wrote one of the coolest and most keen-sighted eye-witnesses of the crisis on May 18, 'that at three yesterday all was gloomy foreboding, and at twenty-five minutes before five last night Althorp did not know the King's answer, till Grey returned at half-past five with the message—"All right." Thus on the decision of one man rests the fate of nations.' William IV. let down the House of Lords gracefully. He did not offend its susceptibilities, which, as a matter of fact, he shared, by swamping its opposition by an infusion of new blood. On the contrary the King authorised the creation of new peers, if necessary to save the measure. But he did more. He addressed a paternal letter to the recalcitrants, urging them to withdraw their opposition. Windsor in those days was omnipotent with the members of the Gilded Chamber. The Lords, to the number of about a hundred, in angry, sullen mood, beat a diplomatic retreat from Westminster, and, in Lord John Russell's words, 'skulked in clubs and country houses' till these calamities were overpast, and Lord Grey, this time with a free hand, was allowed to reintroduce the measure. It was the knowledge that Grey had the King's authority, in the last resort, to create sufficient new peers to pass the Bill which led to the abstentions, and made progress possible.

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Never fear! They'll stop when they reach the bottom
They seem to be getting a little unruly
Harra! Boys. This is what I call going along. Oh! you know how to travel in England! I wish Ireland set up such a Coach in old Ireland
Now see if that be not the man who said he'd drive the sovereign. Hello! old friend you went deuce an ace, you can't drive our pace
That's a shred of the old velvet. He has'nt yet renewed the light of modern Reform
We'll make you a present of it old Boy, we want to drown our cries of misery on upon our wheels
You are pretty fellows to throw away your dear skein, when you might to have your wishes fetched
REFORM

The Reform Coach

Parve puer stimulis et fortiter ultor loris

chisement of the Metropolitan Districts—Marylebone, Finsbury, Lambeth, and the Tower Hamlets.

The metropolis in those days was Radical—a circumstance which was not to its advantage with the House of Lords. Durham took his stand, in the advocacy of the claims of London, on what he declared was the broad principle of the Reform Bill, the claims of population, supplemented by the various considerations arising out of commerce, manufactures, wealth, and the payment of assessed taxes. He contended that, if such reasons were to prevail, there were no parts of the kingdom better entitled to send representatives to the House of Commons than the Metropolitan Districts. He ridiculed the fears expressed in debate by the Earl of Carnarvon, who maintained that if the franchise was conferred on the great masses of the metropolis, the effect would be the growth of agitation, and the promotion of tumultuous and disorderly assemblages.

'The noble Earl seems to think that every meeting of electors must necessarily end in broken heads and broken windows. I, on the contrary, am prepared to show, by a reference to the history of representation, that the violence consequent upon popular excitement is in the inverse ratio of representation; that is, it diminishes as the inhabitants are admitted to the free exercise of the franchise. If your Lordships look at the places throughout the country most distinguished in the annals of popular violence, you will invariably find that the violence was greatest where the representation was either altogether not in existence or most imperfect. In London there has been no riot worth mentioning since those of 1780, which were produced by Lord George Gordon. Facts and experience demonstrate that the evils of popular excitement diminish in proportion as the people are admitted to a participation in political rights—in proportion as they are invested

with a constitutional motive for avoiding every proceeding calculated to endanger the public peace.'

Durham contended that, in proposing to extend the franchise to the Metropolitan Districts, the Government could claim abundant precedent. London was first enfranchised in the reign of Henry III., at which time Westminster was an insignificant village. As wealth and population increased, it received the right of returning representatives at the dawn of Edward I.'s reign, as did Southwark at a later period. The principle, therefore, of the gradual enfranchisement of the suburbs of the metropolis, as they increased in wealth, population, and intelligence, was that upon which the nation proceeded. There was, in fact, not one in the whole list of Parliamentary reformers who did not apply his scheme, when brought forward, to the Metropolitan Districts. Both the plans proposed by Pitt, in 1783 and 1785, had that object in view. 'In the year 1337 the population of London amounted to 35,000, in 1700 to 674,000, and at the present moment it amounts, exclusive of seamen and strangers, to 1,474,000. Now the population of the whole of Great Britain is 16,537,000; it therefore naturally follows that the metropolis contains one-eleventh part of the whole population. If, then, the population alone were taken as the basis of the Bill, London ought to return one eleventh part of the representatives of Great Britain, whereas it will, as at present arranged, return only 16 out of 553, or one thirty-fourth of the whole.'

As regards wealth, if that was to be the criterion, Lord Durham showed that the case was still stronger by an appeal to statistics. When trade was taken into account, the fact had to be faced that one-seventh part of the shipping and one-fourth of the total tonnage of the whole mercantile navy of Great Britain and Ireland

belonged to London. 'If, therefore, we take the question of representation as affecting that commerce to which the nation is so largely indebted for its wealth, power and glory, I ask your Lordships, has this Bill done too much, or has it done enough, when it allows London, whose customs revenue exceeds ten million sterling, but sixteen members, while Ireland, which only contributes to the public revenue 1,700,000*l.*, is to have one hundred and five members?' He went on to urge that, if intelligence was to be accepted as a criterion, then in no city in the world was there so much of it or so keen a desire for knowledge as in the middle class of its inhabitants. Out of the whole number of books published in England, one-third were sold in London; as to the newspapers published, from two-thirds to three-fourths were read and one half retained in the capital.

He ridiculed the notion that to broaden the electorate would be to hand over power to people who were hostile to the existing institutions of the country, and then he passed on to an analysis of the claims of each of the Metropolitan Districts in turn, and showed that the population of them exceeded the united population —was nearly double that—of the combined inhabitants of Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and Sheffield. Nor was that all. The difference in point of assessed taxes was still more startling, for while the four Metropolitan Districts paid the sum of 667,448*l.*, the amount contributed to the revenue by the four great towns in question was only 100,384*l.* Noble Lords opposite seem to think that the object of the lower classes of the people was the destruction of property, and the annihilation of the privileges of their superiors. He, for his part, had no such distrust of his countrymen, and refused to believe that they were actuated by unworthy motives; on the contrary, 'I believe London to be—nay, I am

sure it is—the great emporium of this kingdom, filled with the commerce, the trade, and the learning of the world—the mighty heart of the mightiest empire in the world—containing within its narrow territorial limits more wealth, patriotism, intelligence, and independence than many of the greatest kingdoms.' Holding such views, Lord Durham added finally, that if there was to be any change in the proposed representation of the metropolis from that set forth in the Bill, his own vote would be given not for its limitation but for its extension.

Great as was the impression which Durham's speech made in the House of Lords, its influence in the country was still more remarkable. The enfranchisement of the Metropolitan Districts, though viewed with alarm by the Tory peers, who had seen many proofs that Radical opinion ran high at that time in London, could no longer be resisted, any more than the other provisions of the Reform Bill, and on June 4 the peers bowed before the storm and the measure was carried. Popular enthusiasm, to borrow Lord John Russell's historic phrase, had arisen in its strength, and converted Lord Grey's proposals into law. On June 7, 1832, the Bill received the Royal assent and the new era of government by public opinion began. Durham never concealed his opinion that the country owed the success of the measure to Birmingham, and its salvation from revolution to the firm and final stand for liberty which was made, when the tumult grew menacing, by its political Union. He always maintained that the action of that great midland city, when the crisis was acute, could never be overrated.

The immediate results of the measure were deep and far-reaching. Fifty-six boroughs, more or less rotten and insignificant, were totally disfranchised, and thirty, which had less than 4,000 inhabitants, were

deprived of one member. Two members were taken from a couple of towns which had jointly returned four. The 153 seats obtained by this drastic process were distributed as follows:—Twenty-two new boroughs, amongst them Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and other great centres of industrial life, including the Metropolitan Districts, for which Lord Durham had pleaded, obtained two members, whilst twenty-one of less importance secured one. Sixty-five additional members were bestowed upon the counties, and the remaining eighteen seats were abolished in order to provide five additional members for Wales, eight for Scotland, and five for Ireland. Household franchise for all who paid a rental of 10*l.* and upwards in boroughs was established, while in the counties the franchise was given to copyholders and leaseholders, as well as to tenants at will, paying a rental of 50*l.* or upwards.

One great result of the Act was that it turned the House of Commons into a representative assembly, and brought its members into touch with the actual needs of the community. It had its limitations, of course, for it did not enfranchise the working classes—a circumstance which disappointed the hopes of the democracy. It did not shorten the duration of Parliaments. It ignored the demand for the Ballot. But, in admitting the middle class to political power, it established a principle, the logical outcome of which was the grant of the franchise on a much broader and more representative scale. If it left the working classes but little better than it found them, it held out the promise that the reign of the common people was at hand.

The political struggle under Pitt was between the Monarchy and the Aristocracy; under Grey it was between the latter and the middle classes, for the claims of the democracy in the common acceptation of the term lay outside the scope of the measure. From

the year 1832, for more than the lifetime of a generation, the balance of power lay with the middle classes, and the authority of the landed interest was, moreover, vastly lessened by the industrial revolution which at the time was in progress. The Reform Act was at best only a compromise, but it broke the old exclusive traditions, though it did not result in the violent social upheaval which many timid people had dreaded. It did nothing, as Walter Bagehot has shown, to remove the worst evils from which the nation suffered, for the simple reason that those evils were not in their origin political, but economic. But though it left untouched the tax on corn, and much else that was unjust, it ushered in a new temper in regard to public questions. It recognised the changed conditions of English society, and gave the mercantile and manufacturing classes, with their growing wealth, intelligence, and energy, not only the consciousness of power, but the sense of responsibility. Ardent Radicals, it is true, were chagrined by the cautious attitude of the new electorate; the reformed House of Commons was in no hurry to make sweeping changes—on the contrary, in all legislative matters it made haste slowly.

Still, the Reform Act was a safety valve at a moment when political excitement had assumed a menacing aspect, and the nation seemed on the verge of anarchy. The public rejoicings which followed so great a political victory were prompted as much by hope as by gladness. A new era had commenced. The will of the nation had triumphed, the spirit of progress was abroad, and the multitude felt that, at last, all things were possible that were reasonable and just. 'Look at England before the Reform Bill, and look at it now,' wrote Froude more than forty years later; 'its population almost doubled; its commerce quadrupled; every individual in the kingdom lifted to a high level of comfort and

intelligence—the speed quickening every year; the advance so enormous, the increase so splendid that language turns to rhetoric in describing it.' The substantial truth of such a statement is not open to challenge, but the 'high level of comfort' for every individual is itself a touch of rhetoric, since it is still to seek. It was the multitude outside that made the measure resistless, but that circumstance does not detract from the honour due to statesmen, like Grey, Durham, Althorp, and Russell, who, when the sky was black, saw 'an open sea beyond the icebergs,' and had the courage and the skill to pilot the ship of State through difficulties which threatened to culminate in disaster.

CHAPTER XII

MISSION TO ST. PETERSBURG

Your policy ought to satify Russia entirely, if she is reasonable.
Prince Czartoryski to Palmerston.

1832–1833

Durham's bereavements—Undertakes a Mission to the Tsar—Russian affairs—Partition of Poland—Policy of Nicholas—Opinion in London of the Tsar—The Tsar's welcome to Durham—Russian view of English affairs—Beneficial results of the Mission—Sufferings of the Poles—The King's satisfaction with Durham—Durham's letter to Grey on Russia—Lord Granville on the Mission—Stratford Canning's appointment—Durham's antipathy to the Irish Coercion Bill—Effect of Stanley's policy—The 'Dissenting Minister'—Grey seeks relief from office—Relations between Durham and Palmerston—Durham retires from the Ministry.

DURHAM'S services during the Reform crisis were done under the strain of ill-health and cruel blows of personal misfortune. The death of his eldest son in the autumn of 1831 was to a man of so sensitive a temperament a loss from which he rallied only at the call of public duty. It was followed, whilst the Reform Bill was passing through its final stages, by the sudden death of his mother, Lady Anne Wyndham—sister of the Earl of Jersey, the Duchess of Argyll, and of Lady Ponsonby—who died on April 21, 1832, at the age of sixty. In less than six weeks he was also called to mourn the death of his young daughter, Lady Harriet Caroline Lambton, who died of consumption on May 30, 1832. His great speech on the Reform Bill was made in the House of Lords under the shadow of the first of these bereavements, and with the pained apprehension that the second was close at hand.

When the final blow fell, Lord Durham wrote to Lord Grey, whose sympathy had been constant, a letter in which he expressed his gratitude for Lady Durham's devotion to her stepdaughter:

'London: June 12, 1832.

'My dear Lord Grey,—Although I have from the first never concealed from myself the certainty of the fatal termination of my poor child's illness, yet now that the event has occurred I cannot the better endure it, and the terrible sufferings she underwent latterly affected me so much as to render me less capable of bearing the blow when it was struck. I am in despair. In eight months I have lost son, mother, and daughter. When and where is it to end? I live little in the world. I have few or no friends out of my family. My children are taken from me one after the other. I shudder to think which is to be the next victim. I have borne up as long as I could, and, with exertions hardly to be described have gone through all the turmoil and agitation of public life. I have lost one—and such a child—and with the certain fate of another hanging over me, I can struggle no longer. I cannot express these feelings without telling you, what she will not let me tell her, that Louisa's devoted and unwearied attention to my poor angel has been such from the first, as the fondest mother would have paid. No language can express my gratitude to her. How my poor child adored her! But I must not go on. I thank God you are better. We think of going to Sudbrook to-night, but have not quite decided.

'Ever affectionately yours,

'DURHAM.'

Change of scene became imperative, but Durham, even in the midst of his grief, had no wish to escape from political responsibility. It was at this juncture

that Lord Palmerston proposed that he should undertake a mission to St. Petersburg:

'Stanhope Street: June 22, 1832.

'My dear Durham,—You know we want some person of calibre to go to St. Petersburg upon Lord Heytesbury's quitting it, and in the present complicated state of European affairs, with the many difficult and important questions that are, and must be expected to be, under discussion, it is not very easy to find a person in whom the Government could place entire confidence for such a post. Would the change of scene and occupation render the trip to St. Petersburg for a few months not disagreeable to you? Perhaps such an employment might be useful to you, by forcing your thoughts into other channels. I am sure your undertaking it would be advantageous to the public service.

'My dear Durham, yours sincerely,

'PALMERSTON.'

Grey, who had prompted this suggestion, wrote on the same day urging him to accept the proposal. Durham replied with characteristic promptitude:

'Sudbrook Park: June 22.

'Dear Palmerston,—I feel much obliged to you for the kindly feeling which dictates your letter. I had been apprised this morning by Lord Grey of your intention to write to me on this subject. I can only repeat to you what I said to him. I believe certainly that the change of scene and occupation would be useful to me, and I should have no objection to undertake what you propose, provided it was clearly understood that the mission was a temporary one, and for a specific object. I should not wish to go to St. Petersburg merely to carry on the ordinary business of the Embassy. It will

be necessary that some distinct object be assigned in the instructions, making it in truth a special mission, during the course of which you will be able to appoint a permanent Minister to transact the regular business after my return. This arrangement is the more necessary, because Lord Grey does not propose that I should resign my office at home or my seat in the Cabinet. If therefore, there are distinct points to be pressed on the attention of the Russian Court, the consideration of which is of importance at the present moment, I should be very happy to contribute my humble services for that purpose. If not, I should not consider myself justified in going, however I might think I should be benefited in health and spirits by the journey, and however grateful I may be to you for the friendly motive which animates you in proposing it to me at such a moment. 'Yours very truly,

'DURHAM.'

Lord Palmerston's reply was immediate and explicit. It conveyed instructions wide and weighty enough to call forth all the powers of even the most ambitious statesman. He always believed, to borrow his own phrase, that diplomatists ought to put plenty of 'starch in their neck-cloths.'

'Stanhope Street: June 23, 1832.

'My dear Durham,—You have understood my proposal exactly in the sense in which I made it. There are several very important questions now pending which require the presence of a person of weight at St. Petersburg on the part of England, and which would form an appropriate subject for a special mission. These are:

'First,—The Belgian Question, in which all our main difficulties for the last year and a quarter have come directly or indirectly from the Emperor Nicholas; and upon this subject it is very important to work a

change in the feelings of Russia, first in order to bring the arrangement between Belgium and Holland to a settlement, and next, to place the future relations between Leopold and Nicholas upon a satisfactory footing.

'Secondly,—The affairs of Poland. Our communications with Russia on this subject have been anything but satisfactory, and it would be very desirable if something could be effected in favour of the wretched Poles, and in accordance with the stipulations of the Treaty of Vienna.

'Thirdly,—The state of the Papal Dominions. If upon this matter we could get Russia to lean a little to the views of England and France, some good might perhaps be done, of which, with Metternich's present feelings, I begin to despair.

'Fourthly,—The conflict about to take place in the south-west of Germany between extreme principles, and which, if it cannot by some means or other be averted, may bring empires as well as principles into collision. Russia must necessarily exert a considerable influence in this affair, because the decisions of Metternich will very much depend upon whether he can or cannot reckon upon the military support of Russia in the event of war, produced by his measures.

'Fifthly,—The designs supposed to be entertained by Russia upon the district of Khiva, upon the Eastern shore of the Caspian, which territory it is supposed she has formed an alliance with Persia to conquer, and the possession of which would place her in immediate contact with rivers, navigable down to the northern frontiers of our Indian possessions. These points, together with the minor arrangements still to be determined about Greece, and some other smaller matters, would form as ample a budget as has often been consigned to a special mission, and besides this

there would be an important object to be accomplished, and which your peculiar situation would specially enable you to attain, which is to explain generally to the Russian Government the views and principles of the present Government of England; to make them understand that, though friends to free institutions, we are not promoters of revolution, and to moderate down to its proper and useful degree the apprehension entertained by the Russian Cabinet that we are forming too close an alliance with France. It is highly expedient that they should know the existence of a close defensive connection between us and the French. It might be inconvenient if they were erroneously to imagine that connection offensive in its tendencies.

'My dear Durham, yours sincerely,

'PALMERSTON.'

Durham's scruples were removed by this letter. He thought he saw the chance of becoming a peace-maker in Europe, and two matters impelled him to accept the position—the desire to bring about a satisfactory settlement of the Belgian Question, and to plead with the Emperor Nicholas on behalf of the vanquished Poles, a little nation with whose misfortunes and sufferings he had always sympathised. It was, of course, impossible that the full extent of his instructions should be revealed, and therefore it was publicly announced that the object of Lord Durham's mission was to effect a 'direct and strenuous interference on the part of this country' on behalf of Poland.

The Congress of Vienna in 1815 had settled the partition of Poland between Russia, Prussia, and Austria, but the lion's share had been ceded to Russia, whilst Cracow, with a small surrounding territory, was allowed independence under the protection of Austria. Nicholas I. was proclaimed King of Poland,

and for a time the outlook seemed propitious, for the Tsar gave the Poles a Constitution, a responsible Ministry, a separate army, and such liberty of the Press as was deemed permissible. His chief representative at Warsaw was his brother, the Grand Duke Constantine, who though not Viceroy, was in command of the army. He was a man of arrogant and despotic temper, whose high-handed and often cruel acts provoked discontent. The freedom of the Press, such as it was, was violated, and secret societies sprang up in consequence of the growing spirit of revolt. Matters came to a head in the insurrection of 1830, which quickly assumed such menacing proportions that Constantine, with bag and baggage, was forced to retreat from Poland. In eight days the people had shaken off the yoke of oppression, only to find that their triumph was short-lived.

General Diebitsch, with the Russian Army, 100,000 strong, was sent to quell the rebellion, and, after hard fighting, the last vestige of Polish independence was stamped out, with the result that, in 1832, it was declared an integral part of the Russian Empire. This violation of the Treaty of Vienna was met by the other great Powers, to whom the Poles appealed, with nothing more formidable than verbal remonstrance. Prussia, in fact, threw her weight into the opposite scale, and curried favour with the Tsar, who, since 1820, had developed into the Autocrat of all the Russias. Louis Philippe, to his honour, whilst the struggle was still in progress, offered his mediation; but England, with the Grey Cabinet in power, and the Reform crisis at its height, was content to despatch indignant protests through its Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston. In 1832, to borrow an historic phrase, 'order reigned at Warsaw,' for the chief Polish patriots had been banished to Siberia, or else to the newly won province of the Caucasus. The spirit of the people was crushed, and

Poland was governed with an iron hand as a conquered province.

The Emperor Nicholas I., who ascended the throne in 1825, with inclinations towards the policy of Peter and Catherine, was the ruler under whom these high-handed proceedings were carried, and to whom Durham was now accredited. Just before the departure of Durham to St. Petersburg a debate took place in the House of Commons on the Polish question, in the course of which O'Connell denounced the Emperor as a 'miscreant.' Lord Palmerston, who knew perfectly well that this would embarrass Durham, protested against such language, whereupon Joseph Hume made matters worse by exclaiming that he would not only call the Tsar a miscreant but a monster in human form. Lord Grey did his best to remove the unfortunate impression. He was aware that his own Government was regarded with suspicion at the Court of St. Petersburg, where the Reform Bill was looked upon as a weak and disastrous concession. He told the Princess Lieven he knew that Russia was anticipating he would be turned out of office, and a Tory Ministry come at once into power. He added: 'They are very short-sighted if they think this would prove more favourable to their views. We may be overturned, though I see little reason to fear such an event at present; but if a Tory administration should succeed, it would not last six months, and the Government would fall not into our hands, but into those of a party professing opinions far exceeding ours.'

A curious admission in itself, and one which shows that Lord Grey recognised the strength of the Radical sentiment in the country, which the measure he had just carried had only partly mollified. On the eve of Durham's departure, which took place at the beginning of July, Lord Essex sent him a cheery letter

of farewell: 'My sincere and best wishes for your safe and speedy return. You will find the Russian bear sucking his paws. If the Tsar has read O'Connell's and Hume's speeches before you get there, he will probably be as "cross as a bear with a sore head."' Durham admitted smilingly that it was not an agreeable *métier*, but added, 'One must learn to turn one's hand to everything in this life.'

William IV., who, at the best, was a monarch of slender intelligence and robust prejudices, was at this time largely under the sway of his meddlesome brother, the Duke of Cumberland, and of the Duke of Wellington, —influences which were hostile, to the last degree, to Durham and all his political aspirations. The King, moreover, was still smarting over Durham's insistence on the creation of peers, and was inclined to resent his outspoken language when the crisis between the Court and the Cabinet grew acute, at the height of the political struggle. The King was accustomed, at least that is the testimony of the Princess Lieven, to call him 'Robert le Diable,' and on the eve of his departure for St. Petersburg he exclaimed, 'Thank God, we have got rid of him for some months.' Durham, for his part, declared that William IV. had always treated him with coolness—indeed to his intimates he used a stronger term. It is pleasant to think that, in the closing months of his reign, William IV. altogether altered his opinion of Durham, and spoke of him in the highest terms.

Durham left England on July 2, 1832, and went by way of Copenhagen to St. Petersburg, where he remained until the beginning of September. He presented his credentials on July 22, and was most cordially received by the Tsar, with whom, after a State dinner at the Palace, he had a long conversation. Nicholas expressed the greatest respect for England, and declared that it was his anxious desire to be on the

best of terms. He made no secret of his distrust of the Government of Louis Philippe, and expressed his displeasure with the conduct of the King of Holland in regard to Belgium. He added that England would be perfectly justified in using force to carry the Belgian treaty into execution, but he for his part must stand aside. Two days later Lord and Lady Durham witnessed a grand ceremonial from the Emperor's apartments, the raising of a massive granite column, erected in honour of the late Tsar Alexander. The Emperor afterwards visited H.M.S. *Talavera*, which had brought Durham, and expressed his delight at seeing the flags of England and Russia flying together on one ship.

Durham's conversations with the Tsar and Count Nesselrode made him certain that Holland would get no help from Russia, and he told Lord Grey that the Dutch would have no alternative but to yield when once they looked facts in the face. He took advantage of his constant diplomatic intercourse with Nesselrode, at that time and for many years afterwards one of the most powerful statesmen in Europe, to explain to him the state of parties in England, the real principles of the Reform Bill, and the way in which the measure was likely to work. The Russian Court had persuaded itself that the Reform Bill was a measure, not dictated by justice and expediency, but the outcome of weakness and panic, and therefore Durham's assurances were opportune. He told Nesselrode that the first election under the Reform Bill was certain to strengthen the hands of Lord Grey, and that, whilst he was in office, peace would be maintained, so long as that was consistent with the honour of England.

All this in itself sounds trivial now, but the fact remains—Durham's mission to St. Petersburg in 1832 did not a little to preserve the peace of Europe. It

paved the way, moreover, for an understanding between England and Russia, which lasted nearly a quarter of a century, and was only broken by the Crimean War. He was accused, of course, by his political enemies—they were few but important—of having pandered to the Tsar, but of this there is no evidence. On the contrary, his presence in Russia at that crisis was in itself a liberal education to Nicholas and his advisers, and though, in its immediate results, his mission was, in a sense, unsuccessful, yet it is scarcely possible to exaggerate its indirect advantages. The relations—they ripened into cordial and lifelong friendship—between the Autocrat of All the Russias and the most Radical and uncompromising member of the Grey Cabinet were piquant, but Durham, who was beyond all else an honest and fearless man, never, as his subsequent career abundantly proved, surrendered his own independence, or was in the least degree disloyal to his political convictions. 'Durham has keen eyes,' said one of the shrewdest contemporary students of political affairs in Europe, and that he used them in Russia for the good of his country the subsequent course of foreign policy is itself a witness.

The Princess Lieven, when Durham started for St. Petersburg, assured him that he would not be able to mention the word Poland. The Tsar and his Ministers, in the autumn of 1832, were not likely to forego the triumph which they had won at the point of the sword. Lord Grey, looking back in after years, regretted that he had not sent a British fleet to the Baltic in the summer of 1831, when the Polish generals were victorious. Nothing short of intervention by force could have saved the gallant little nation, for Nicholas and Nesselrode were not prepared to accept mediation. Russia now took the ground that the Treaty of Vienna was not concerned with questions of

internal administration. The Constitution of 1815 was the free act of the Tsar, which the rebellion of the Poles had annulled. Durham was, of course, not responsible for the circumstance that his mission to St. Petersburg was belated. He went when he was sent, and did the best in his power, but the fact remains that he was twelve months too late. Russia had triumphed all along the line in the interval, and Nesselrode was not the man to yield to mere verbal expostulations on the morrow of a costly as well as a cruel victory. However, Durham's representations modified the attitude of Russia towards Belgium. But his task was more difficult in the case of Poland.

The cry of the Polish women, distracted by the sufferings of their husbands, and the privation of their children, 'Oh, that the Tsar could be drowned in our tears!' sent a thrill of indignant sympathy through Europe, but the principle of autocracy had triumphed in Russia, and Nesselrode was content. Durham directed his energies to obtaining, as he said, 'as great an alleviation as possible of the miseries and sufferings of the unhappy Poles'—a delicate task in which a less skilful advocate of mercy would have courted, in the prevailing mood of the Tsar, a curt rebuff. In a letter to his friend Edward Ellice, M.P., which bears date August 29, 1832, he puts the matter briefly: 'I have declared to the Russian Government an opinion of their proceedings in Poland, received from them explanations of their acts there, and made such representations of our feelings and those of the people of England as I trust will have the effect of promoting acts of clemency and grace, which was all we could expect, unless we were prepared to go to war in the cause of Poland, which we were not, which the country was not, which Parliament was not, and which a reformed House of Commons will still less be prepared to do.'

He was able to announce, moreover, that his representations had not passed altogether unheeded, since the Tsar, shortly after his arrival, issued a 'merciful ukase' in regard to the Poles, a slight concession which did not satisfy Durham.

It has been said, and with truth, that during the four years of the Grey Ministry the Tsar Nicholas was so situated and in such a frame of mind that it was well-nigh impossible for any Englishman to please, to convince, or even to frighten him, and that all that could be got out of his evil will was a slow consent to the deliverance of Belgium. Meanwhile, Durham had the satisfaction of knowing from Palmerston that William IV. was agreeably surprised at the manner in which he had performed his diplomatic duties at St. Petersburg. 'The King,' wrote the Foreign Secretary on September 14, 'is very much pleased with your despatch about Polish affairs and with the judgment and discretion you have shown in the execution of the very difficult part of your instructions which related to that delicate topic.' Palmerston added that his Majesty, having, by a coincidence, received Prince Lieven in audience on the very day on which the despatch in question arrived, took the opportunity to express to the Russian Ambassador in very strong terms his approbation of the manner in which you had performed your public duties at St. Petersburg.'

Durham kept Lord Grey fully informed of all that was happening, as the following letter, written shortly before his departure, conclusively proves:

'St. Petersburg: August 30, 1832.

'My dear Lord Grey,—I am now making preparations for my departure, which I trust will take place in ten days from this time. Your letters therefore in answer to this should be directed to Berlin. Van de

Weyer and Goblet being authorised to treat, barring diplomatic delays that must now be arranged, all my other business with Nesselrode is transacted—the ladies have seen all the sights. The Court is at a country palace, and the Russian society scattered all over the empire, some at Odessa, others at Archangel. There is nothing therefore to keep us here, and I have asked for my *audience de congé*.

'The Emperor has offered me his own steamboat to take me to Stettin, which is only one day's journey from Berlin—if I go by sea there it will save us that tedious journey of a fortnight over the worst road in Pagandom. The voyage is three days only, and as it is generally fine and calm the two first weeks in September I think I shall decide on that plan, provided I can accomplish the conveyance of the servants and carriages in some other vessel, there not being room for them in the *Isora*.

'I trust you will not think of dissolving Parliament until you have had exact returns of the state of the Registration. Owing to the delays of the Bill, little time has been allowed for it, or the people being made acquainted with its details. The constituency therefore for the new elections will be much more limited than at any future dissolution, and if the superior activity, and application of pecuniary means, of the Tories have given them a majority of *registered* votes, when they are notoriously in a minority of actual votes, this must be remedied in some way or another. If it was not, a Parliament would be elected at variance with the opinions, not only of the nation, but of the constituent body, and we should have the same scenes acted over again which have so agitated the country. A correct return therefore of the registration everywhere must be had, and if a great deficiency is found, owing to non-rating or non-registration, within the time allowed by the

Bill, you have but one thing to do—call the old Parliament together and remedy the evil. Don't blindly dissolve, without knowing the effects which will be produced.

'I have written to Ellice on this subject, for it is of the greatest, nay vital, importance.

'You will see that I have already received some explanations from Nesselrode on Polish matters, and more are promised me—indeed, on all the Polish points named in my instructions. By the mode in which I have managed the discussion of this delicate and difficult question with him, I am enabled to talk upon it without reserve, and he answers me in the same spirit. (I remember Mme. de Lieven told me I should not be able to open my lips on the subject.) It was the one that weighed most heavily on my mind of all the topics I had to encounter. I think I have done all that could be expected. Our feelings have been expressed as strongly as possible, without a declaration of war; they have not been so expressed as to give to Russia an excuse for pleading dictatorial interference as a reason for not noticing my representations at all, but, on the contrary, in a way that cannot but incite the Emperor to acts of clemency and moderation, in order to gain our good opinion and justify us in proclaiming it publicly. On German, Swiss, and Italian matters my representations have induced the Government to send Pozzo di Borgo to Berlin and Vienna, and I have every reason to believe that his instructions are such as will lead to strengthening greatly our efforts to prevent Austrian and Prussian interference in the affairs of the minor States. As for Belgium, I hope I have contributed, by the tone of my language, to induce the Emperor to let the King of Holland be aware that he will not support him in any further attempts to resist the Conference. For this purpose firmness was requisite, without at the same

time using any irritating language which could excite the Emperor's feelings of relationship.

'I have now gone shortly through my proceedings here. You will say, no doubt, that I seem very well satisfied with them. I own I have a feeling of self-satisfaction at having conquered all the difficulties in my own way, arising both from my personal position, and the nature of the subjects entrusted to me. I may also indulge in it privately to you, because I know well in no other quarter shall I meet with anything like praise or approbation. I have, however, done my duty, and have had the advantage of becoming acquainted with the principles and rule of action of a Government which must always exert a great influence over the destinies of Europe. Hereafter, when I emerge from the obscurity of my present position in the Government, this knowledge and experience cannot but be useful to me. It was the prospect of this that in a great degree determined me upon taking so long a journey.

'Ever affectionately yours,

'DURHAM.'

Durham won golden opinions at St. Petersburg. The Tsar was impressed with his ability and grasp of affairs. The Princess Lieven, who of course was closely informed of all that was happening, told Lord Grey, 'They are certainly satisfied in my country at the way Lord Durham deals with business and treats all political questions. They think him remarkably clever, and say that he has a manner of discussing affairs which is both straightforward and honest.' This was the more remarkable because Durham's reputation as a Radical had preceded him to Russia and aroused the strongest prejudice against him. One letter, out of many which Durham received at this juncture, merits quotation. It was from his old friend Lord Granville,

then Ambassador at Paris. No English diplomatist of that period was better acquainted with the difficulties of a special mission to St. Petersburg, for Lord Granville in 1804 had himself been sent as a Plenipotentiary to the Court of Russia, at the time when Napoleon was using all his influence to reconcile the Tsar Alexander I. to the territorial conquests gained by the French Army in Prussia and Austria.

'Paris: September 13.

'My dear Lord Durham,—I was very happy to hear that you had been so cordially received by the Emperor and that his Imperial Majesty seemed so desirous to cultivate an alliance with England. I have no doubt that the frank explanations you have given of the view taken by the British Government of the different questions which occupy the attention of the Cabinets of Europe have had an excellent effect in dispelling erroneous impressions, which may have prevailed at St. Petersburg respecting the opinions and principles of Lord Grey's Administration. The language of the opponents of the Reform Bill respecting the progress of the measure was calculated to make foreign Courts believe that you were all the enemies of kingly power, the allies of the Propagandists—in short, a revolutionary faction. The mission of a member of the Cabinet to St. Petersburg, at the same time that it showed the importance which the King's Government attached to the establishing of a good understanding between England and Russia, was without doubt the best means of correcting any misapprehension that might exist in the mind of the Emperor as to the real principles and policy of the British Ministry. I trust that his Imperial Majesty and his Minister are now satisfied that when we inculcate moderation and deprecate a system of overstrained repression, we do so, not because we wish to promote the objects of revolutionary agitators,

but because we are anxious they should not gain proselytes, and because we are convinced in this age that the only way of avoiding a collision, which may be fatal to social order as well as to monarchical institutions, is to endeavour to guide public opinion and not to act in defiance of it. Lady Granville joins with me in kind remembrances to Lady Durham and yourself.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

A new cloud, however, had appeared on the horizon. Durham's observations at St. Petersburg had convinced him that the permanent Ambassador must be a man who combined force of character with conspicuous tact and discretion. Palmerston was anxious to appoint Stratford Canning; but Canning had offended in some way the susceptibilities of the Tsar, and Durham saw that it would be impolitic to send to the Russian Court at that crisis so high-handed and irascible a representative. Nesselrode, he assured Palmerston, made many inquiries as to who was likely to be sent as the permanent Ambassador. 'He seems to wish much that it should not be Stratford Canning. He said he could not do business pleasantly with him, he was so suspicious and susceptible.' Palmerston, however, would not give way, and in due course Canning was gazetted, with the result that the Tsar intimated that he would not receive him. What actually happened is best told in Lord Durham's own words—never before published. 'When it became a question who was to be Ambassador after my leaving St. Petersburg, Lord Palmerston was told that there was only one man in England to whom the Emperor objected, namely Canning. This was communicated in the most friendly way to Lord Palmerston by Lieven and myself, and before Lord Palmerston had even named Canning. In despite of this, Palmerston

appointed Canning, and even gazetted him, without conveying any notice of his intention to do so to Lord Grey. When remonstrated with by Lieven, he said, 'Canning is of my party, and I must provide for him.' The result, Durham said, was the suspension of all confidential intercourse between the two Governments at a time when, in the interests of the peace of Europe, harmony between them was most necessary.

Durham returned to England by way of Berlin and Brussels, and arrived in London at the end of November, to find the Cabinet hopelessly divided over the question of Ireland, where Stanley's Coercion Bill, by its severity, had thrown O'Connell into opposition and brought the country to the verge of civil war. Lord Dalling used to say that it is dangerous for a Government to be too strong, and he cited the Grey Cabinet in proof of such an assertion. When the Reform Bill was passed there were Whigs, he declared, who were sanguine enough to believe that there would never be a Tory Government again, and even Lord Palmerston was inclined to hold that opinion. The condition of Ireland was undoubtedly alarming in the autumn of 1832 and the spring of 1833, but Durham was not alone in thinking that coercion was an unsatisfactory remedy. He never concealed his antipathy to the Irish Coercion Bill; it was a measure which did violence to his most cherished convictions. Althorp, Duncannon, and Russell had also their scruples, but Stanley at this crisis had the support of Lord Grey, and his policy it was that prevailed. Durham, on his return from Russia, chafed not a little at the ascendency of Stanley in the Cabinet.

'We can never do anything,' Durham said, 'with Ireland but by a great effort, which must combine a determination to make our authority respected, and the evidence that we only want great authority to develop national prosperity. These bit-by-bit

reforms, introduced amongst a population excited, undisciplined, and taught to believe that everything is gained by agitation, will never succeed. I would bring forward a system including all the measures I deemed desirable, and granting a dictatorial power to the man who was to carry that system out. If I could get this great power confided to able hands, and to be exercised for only good objects, and but for a limited time, then I should have a policy which I think I could make successful; but shall I, or any man, have this?—that is the question.'

At the elections at the end of 1832, Ireland returned only twenty-three Tories out of one hundred and five members, a sure proof in itself, if any was needed, that the Whigs, in spite of their political blunders, retained the confidence of the people. Just after the General Election, Lord Grey, in the opening days of 1833, wrote, from Downing Street, to his daughter a letter in which he expressed his pleasure that any misunderstanding between himself and Durham had been avoided.

'If anything could add to my happiness in knowing that Lambton is satisfied with what has passed with me, it is the pleasure which you express in consequence of it. Indeed, your letter was not wanted to assure me of this. Knowing your devotion to him, and being equally confident of your affection for me and your mother, any alienation or estrangement which might interrupt or diminish our intercourse must have been distressing to you to the greatest degree, and all danger of this is, as I trust, removed for ever. There are many things which I should wish to mention to Lambton, but it is really impossible for me to write them. I have been all the morning occupied without intermission, and I have only now five minutes left to be in time for the post. Amongst other things I should

have wished to have had his assistance in the King's Speech. It is now drawn up, but I cannot get a copy made before the post goes, and I will send him one to-morrow. I really am overpowered by the burthen I have to bear. The difference in me, even between this and last year, is beyond what you would believe, and will soon be too apparent. I doubt whether I shall be able to go on during many weeks of the session; after its close, if I survive, it will be impossible.'

The new Parliament met on January 29, 1833, and the result of the elections, not merely in Ireland but everywhere else, was an accession of strength to the Government. Only one hundred and seventy-two Tories were returned to the first reformed Parliament, but for all that the Radicals were disappointed with the result of the first elections under the new Act. The pendulum in many constituencies, where the Liberal cause had triumphed, had swung a long way in the opposite direction. The truth is, the struggle for Reform had been marked by so much violence of speech, and had occasioned so much disorder, that with the attainment of victory the nation was inclined, to an extent which the Radicals resented, to slacken speed, and as a result it sent to the new Parliament a great many prosperous, cautious, moderate men, who, though pledged to support Lord Grey, were by no means eager for any rash experiments in the problem of government. It almost looked at the moment as if the new House of Commons was an assembly inclined to halt between two opinions, and it is certain that in spite of the presence of men like Grote, and other of the philosophic Radicals, trained in the school of Bentham, a great many of the new members who sat on the Whig benches were evidently disinclined to carry out the drastic proposals of the more advanced

section of the Cabinet, of which Durham was the leading spirit.

It is at least certain that the Whigs lost, in the spring of 1833, a golden opportunity of doing something on the broad scale to settle the political grievances of Ireland. Lord Anglesey, who was most unpopular, was retained as Lord Lieutenant, and Stanley, who was now admitted to Cabinet rank, remained Chief Secretary, and continued to govern the country on lines so harsh and arbitrary that O'Connell—who, more than any other man, represented public opinion in Ireland—was thrown into open revolt. Lord Grey was between cross fires even in his own Cabinet, but it is plain enough that at this critical juncture his sympathies were with Stanley rather than with Durham, who was mortified at his inability to make the view which he advocated the policy of the Government. Durham was at this time so often in a minority, that one of the wits of the period dubbed him the 'Dissenting Minister'—a title which, it must be owned, fitted him at the moment uncommonly well, though whether he was right or wrong in his protests is another matter.

Durham told Lord Grey that, in his opinion, the Irish Secretary possessed unrivalled powers of debate, but he added that he had small confidence in his judgment. 'He brings forward the harshest measures, and when they have had the effect of irritating all Ireland, and exciting the most violent feelings against himself and the Government, he is forced to withdraw them. Mark my words, in speaking he will excel, but in leading the House of Commons, and especially a reformed House of Commons, he will fail.' The last words of this prophecy assuredly did not come true, for—apart from his services, which were brilliant during the struggle for Reform—Stanley, when he parted company with the Whigs, and went over to the opposite camp,

retained for a long term of years his political ascendency, and rose eventually, as Lord Derby, to be Prime Minister.

Durham's own health at this time was wretched. The personal sorrows of the last two years had told visibly upon his strength, and with the dawn of the year he was called to mourn yet another loss. The deaths in 1831 of his eldest boy, and, in 1832, of his third daughter and his mother, were now followed by the death of his second daughter. Lord Grey himself merely retained office from that sense of public duty which was the ruling motive of his public life. This comes to light in a letter written to Lady Durham on January 14, in which, after speaking in feeling terms of the 'dreadful and accumulated afflictions' of his son-in-law, he goes on to say, 'If you could know how I am harassed and tormented you would pity me. I have not strength either of body or of mind to bear it. Young ambition never looked with the same eagerness to place and power, as I do to escape from the burden of both; and the moment that I can resign my office to the King, without breaking up the Administration, will be seized by me with unfeigned delight.'

Allusion has already been made to Lord Palmerston's ill-advised action in nominating Stratford Canning as Ambassador to St. Petersburg. It was only when the Tsar stated that he should decline to receive Canning that Palmerston, with considerable ill grace, yielded. Lord Durham felt keen irritation at Palmerston's conduct. Not only were the Tsar's wishes and the Lievens' protests disregarded by the nomination, but his own emphatic remonstrances seemed to be contemptuously set aside. It was from this period, and probably owing to the conflict of opinion over Canning, that Durham and Palmerston began, almost imperceptibly, to drift apart. Lord Dalling was accustomed to say that

Palmerston and Durham—and he spoke from an intimate knowledge of both—would have 'agreed perfectly' if they had understood each other. But Durham, he added, looked upon Palmerston as a disguised Tory, whilst Palmerston thought Durham an ambitious revolutionist.

Durham's absence from the meetings of the Cabinet drew the following remonstrance from one of his most sympathetic colleagues:

'February 9, 1833.

'My dear Lord Durham,—We have got through the first debate very successfully in the end, but with a good deal of pitching and rolling in the course of our voyage. However, the grand battle begins on Tuesday. Althorp will bring the whole subject of the Irish Church before the Cabinet to-morrow, and I hope some changes may be made. I hope you will not stay away much longer, as you can and ought to state to your colleagues distinctly the prospects before them.

'For my own part I think very well of the reformed house. But it is yet a child, and hardly knows how to walk.

'Yours truly,

'J. Russell.'

The Irish Coercion Act of 1833 was to Durham the last straw in detaching his sympathies from the Cabinet. He felt that the Government, by the suspension of Habeas Corpus, the introduction of martial law, and other repressive measures, was adopting a dangerous and unworthy course, and, as Lord Grey seemed wedded to Stanley's proposals, he determined to stand aside, and, in consequence, resigned office in March 1833, a step which was followed by his elevation to an earldom. His letter of resignation was as follows:

'Cleveland Row: March 12, 1833.

'My dear Lord Grey,—More than four months have now elapsed during which, from the severe affliction

with which I have been visited and the illness which followed it, I have been prevented from attending the Cabinet Councils, or transacting any Ministerial duties, except such as regarded the mere business of the Privy Seal. If I could any longer entertain the hope of a speedy recovery, I might feel justified in remaining in retirement a short time longer, but the state of my health has become so much worse of late that I cannot anticipate any relief, or even the chance of it, unless from a temporary change of climate, and abstinence from the cares and anxieties of office. In these circumstances I have no alternative but to lay before the King my resignation of the office which I hold in his Majesty's service.

'Yours ever affectionately,

'DURHAM.'

Durham said at the time that he felt doubtful whether he would ever recover his health. It was plain to himself, as well as to others, that his only chance was to lie fallow for a time, so far as that was possible to a man of his eager temperament. The cause of this sudden breakdown was, however, another matter. It was due quite as much to political disappointment as to a sudden accumulation of personal sorrows. Palmerston asserted at the time that Durham's retirement was altogether due to ill-health, and added, 'had he been well, nothing, I believe, would have induced him to go out.' But Durham's own letters show that, though illness rendered such a step advisable, he would have remained at his post had he been able to prevent what he regarded as the disastrous policy of Coercion in Ireland.

CHAPTER XIII

OUT OF OFFICE

I feel confident that the expectations under which the Reform Bill was carried will be realised by the good sense of a brave and enlightened people.—Lord Durham.

1833

Effect of Durham's resignation on the Cabinet—His relations with his workpeople—Joseph Parkes—The Westminster Club—Birmingham Political Union—Coolness between Durham and Grey—Irish Church Reform—The 'Chief of the True Believers'—Durham's friendship with the Duchess of Kent, and his influence on Princess Victoria—Actions for libel—Dissensions in the Cabinet—Durham at Gateshead—Intelligence *versus* Property—Durham urges further Reform—His reasons for accepting a peerage—Attends a public dinner at Sunderland—Distrust of the Ministry—Incident at Gateshead.

THE resignation of Durham, though it removed a good deal of friction within the Cabinet, was a blow to the Grey Ministry from which it never recovered. It was a delight to the Tories, it was a relief to the least progressive of the Whigs, but the Radicals throughout the country looked upon it as nothing short of a calamity. If Durham could have had his way at this juncture in regard to Ireland, instead of Stanley, it is scarcely too much to say that the whole course of Irish history during the next half-century might have been changed. He took a broad and statesmanlike view of the political situation in that country, and knew perfectly well that it was useless at one moment to blow hot and at another cold on the aspirations of a generous and sensitive race. He was a foe all his life, when great grievances had to be redressed, to timid half-measures, for the secret of

his power, not merely in regard to questions at issue in that country, but in public affairs both at home and abroad, lay in the conviction that courage and conciliation were imperative to any just and lasting settlement of acknowledged wrongs.

As it was, baffled, chagrined, broken in health, and crushed by family misfortunes, he had no alternative but to retire, though he did so strong in the belief that the proud motto of the Lambtons in his case would yet be fulfilled, 'Le jour viendra.' Set free for the moment from the burden of office, he busied himself with the interests of his workpeople in the north by establishing the Lambton Collieries Association, for the maintenance of pitmen in old age, sickness, and infirmity. Twelve hundred men speedily joined this Association by voluntary subscription, and Durham, on his part, contributed from that time forward, each year, a sum equivalent to one-sixth part of the contributions of all the members. He also encouraged, at a period when employers of labour were notoriously remiss in such directions, the formation of schools for the young and of libraries for the old. There were times when his relations with the workpeople on his great estate were strained, but, for the most part, they were not only cordial but generous. He never refused to meet his colliers face to face, in order to thrash out any difficulties which might arise between capital and labour, and often entertained delegates from his collieries at Lambton Castle, sometimes to the number of fifty at a time. It was said of him in 1833 that no man in England more perfectly understood the temper of those beneath him, or knew better how to handle their susceptibilities with delicacy and tact.

Always fond of the sea, Durham spent much of the spring and early summer on board his yacht, cruising in the Solent. He had a house at Cowes, and

was in treaty about this time for Norris Castle. He finally purchased Hamlet Lodge, which at the present time is the marine residence of Lady Dorchester. The Isle of Wight always suited him, and in those days it was comparatively quiet, for the holiday crowd had scarcely discovered it. In April he was elected Lord High Steward of Hull, at the instance of his old friend Sir William Hutt. In May he told Grey that his health was slowly returning. 'My nights are at last good. Sailing always agrees with me, and I mean to be out all day.' In June his health was so far re-established that he went on board his yacht to Antwerp, and thence proceeded to Brussels on a visit to King Leopold. He was back at his old moorings off Cowes before the end of June, and it was about this time, as his letters show, that his acquaintance with Mr. Joseph Parkes began to ripen into a friendship, which only closed with his own death.

Parkes was a remarkable man, and one of the founders of the Westminster Club, which, after a year's existence, changed its name to the Westminster Reform Club, at the suggestion of Joseph Hume. It was the precursor of the present Reform Club, started early in 1836. Durham was one of the foremost supporters of this movement and one of the original five trustees. Parkes died in 1865, unluckily without writing his memoirs, which would have been piquant, especially in regard to all that happened when Grey and Melbourne were at the head of affairs. It was admitted at the time of his death, by those who were exceptionally well qualified to judge, that no man then alive knew more about the secret history of the Reform Bill than the shrewd, alert, quick-witted lawyer, who might almost be described as the first of the Birmingham wire-pullers in modern politics.

The manner in which 'Joe Parkes,' as his intimates

always called him, came to his unique, but half-veiled ascendency deserves to be told, but to do so means to hark back for a moment to the autumn of 1831, when the country seemed on the verge of revolution. It was in November of that year that the Birmingham Political Union, the most powerful of all the organisations which had sprung into existence, as if by magic, to further the cause of Reform, proposed to take the law into its own hands. Exasperated beyond measure at the opposition to the Reform Bill, the Union summoned a meeting to frame a general refusal to pay taxes until the Bill was carried, and, in order to intimidate those who blocked the way, it called upon all who attended at the demonstration to appear armed.

It was at this juncture that the Duke of Wellington, who found an all-too-ready helper in the King's brother, the Duke of Cumberland, worked upon the fears of William IV. He told the King that he had it on the best authority that the Birmingham Union had entered into a contract with one of the largest firms of gun-makers in England for a supply of arms on a broad scale. The King forwarded Wellington's letter to Grey, and it was found that the Duke had been misinformed, though the violent attitude taken up by the Union was quite enough to show that they would not hesitate, as a last resort, to appeal to force. William IV. insisted on a Royal Proclamation, warning the people of the United Kingdom against the impolicy and illegality of the unions which had been established in all the large towns, and Grey and his colleagues feared that they might be compelled to make an example of the agitators in Birmingham—a course which in the interests of the Reform Bill itself they were naturally anxious to avoid.

Personally, Lord Grey would have preferred to quarrel with the extremists, rather than connive at their

violence, for he knew, only too well, that their inflammatory tirades were of a kind to alienate the middle classes, who all through the struggle stood stoutly by law and order. Moreover, Lord Grey had always a decided objection to any attempt to force his hand, and it is an open secret that he greatly resented the hectoring tone of the political manifestoes of the ultra-Radicals. On the other hand, some of his colleagues, and notably Durham and Duncannon, were not likely to support any action of the Cabinet of a decisive kind against the unions. In this dilemma the proverbial good sense of Lord Althorp, who shared Grey's views, suggested a solution of the difficulty.

Althorp had discovered a young solicitor in Birmingham of high character, and of great weight with the Radicals of that town. Carlyle, who visited Birmingham some years before, had described him in a sentence. Speaking of his visit he declares that he met some notable people, and the foremost of them was a certain 'Joe Parkes, then a small Birmingham attorney, afterwards the famous Reform Club ditto—a rather pleasant talking, shrewd enough little fellow, with a knowing, lightly-satirical way.' Althorp knew enough of the shrewd, satirical little fellow to feel sure he could be trusted, and therefore confided to Parkes, what, as he admitted at the time, was not merely a delicate, but a hazardous mission. He asked him to go to the Radical headquarters in Birmingham, and represent to Attwood confidentially—on Althorp's authority—the predicament in which the Cabinet was placed. Parkes was further told to assure Attwood that, if the proposed armed meeting was not abandoned, the cause of Reform would not simply be imperilled, but ruined.

Parkes succeeded admirably, and so won his spurs with the Whigs. He became professionally mixed up with them in election matters, and was brought into

close contact with Lord Durham over the knotty problem of Registration. He had a great deal to do in organising, in the Liberal camp, the first critical election after the Reform Bill, and early in 1833 he relinquished his practice in Birmingham, and was appointed Secretary to the Royal Commission for inquiry into the Municipal Corporations of England and Wales—a position for which he was admirably suited, and one which brought him into immediate touch with all the Radical associations of the kingdom.

Fortunately, both sides of the correspondence between Durham and Parkes have been preserved. It was scanty and intermittent until 1834, but from that year onward it was constant. After Lord Durham's death in 1840, Parkes returned to the Countess all his friend's letters, and as her husband had kept the other half of the correspondence, they form together an interesting survey of public affairs, apart from the light which is thrown on the personality of the writers. This, for the purposes of the present biography, is the more valuable as, though a great many letters addressed to Lord Durham exist amongst the papers at Lambton, comparatively few of his own replies appear to have been kept by the representatives of his political colleagues and friends. This statement is perhaps necessary, in view of the prominence which is given to Durham's intimacy with Parkes in later passages of this narrative.

It is time, however, to return to the summer of 1833. 'Pray let me hear from you when you have any time to spare,' wrote Durham to Parkes on June 21. 'I am busily engaged in laying in a stock of health with which this place (Cowes) abounds. For I foresee the time will come, and soon, when strength of mind and body will be much wanted.' A coolness had arisen between him and Lord Grey

at this juncture, for the Prime Minister's Irish policy was a sore point to his more liberal-minded son-in-law, and Durham's differences of opinion, especially with those to whom he was really attached, were all too apt to assume the character of a personal grievance. 'Don't expect me,' he wrote at this time to his intimate friend, Tom Duncombe, afterwards the Radical member for Finsbury, but who at the moment was, like himself, unhorsed, 'to talk politics. I am quite wretched about the state of things.' He was indignant also, as his next letter to Lord Grey conclusively shows:

'Cowes: July 30, 1833.

'My dear Lord Grey,— . . I only learnt the determination you had come to, as to the withdrawal of the Appropriation Clause from the Irish Church Bill, from the newspapers. You must well remember that the insertion of that clause was what alone induced me, when a member of your Administration, to support the Bill at all. I might therefore, I think, have been prepared by half a dozen words for so important a step. From Ellice I could not hear it, for up to the hour of his going to the House of Commons (ten at night) he was not aware of it. As for the Bill without the clause, if I was to give a free vote, I should vote against it. You know that I always objected to it as long as it was a mere holding up of the "great ecclesiastical enormity," as someone justly called it (the Irish Church) in the House of Commons. All these minor changes are to me a matter of indifference, therefore, and I tell you fairly that the fact of your being at the head of the Government alone had prevented my coming to town to oppose the Bill altogether. As long as you are in that situation, I never will do any public act that may be construed into one of opposition; but any feelings and opinions I owe to you are decidedly at variance

with the policy which the Government has thought fit to adopt. Depend upon it, you never can by any act of concession obtain the support of the Tories, even for an hour, whilst you gradually are losing the support and confidence of the great and real governing party of this country—the majority in the House of Commons, and the constituent body which returns them. But this I have so often said, and I have been so often disregarded, that I now only repeat it for the purpose of accounting for my present feeling, and not with the remotest hope of convincing you. . . .

'Yours ever affectionately,

'DURHAM.'

The question of Irish Church Reform had been discussed in the Cabinet for many months. In the autumn of 1832 Durham had severely criticised a paper drawn up by Stanley on the subject, and submitted to the Cabinet. This paper was based on the non-alienation of Church property, and it advocated the maintenance of Protestantism by setting up a church in every parish, whether there were Protestant residents or not. It was this principle of non-alienation to which Durham, and also Lord John Russell, strongly objected, and the omission from the Bill, passed in the summer of 1833, of the question of appropriating Church revenues, gave rise to the strong protest in the above letter to Lord Grey.

The Princess Lieven, who was nothing if not outspoken and cynical, summed up the situation in a letter to her brother in 1833. Durham, she declared, regarded himself as the 'Chief of the True Believers,' that is, she explained, chief of the statesmen who desired 'reform but not a republic.' He thought, she added, that his father-in-law's course led 'straight to the latter result'—a palpable but characteristic

exaggeration of Durham's attitude at the period of his resignation of office. Lord Grey, with whom at the moment the Princess was carrying on an intimate correspondence, couched in flattering, not to say endearing terms, she dismisses in the same epistle, as a 'thorough old woman,' and as such scarcely worthy of mention.[1]

Durham at this time, and indeed for many years, stood in the most confidential relations with the Duchess of Kent, who, in any difficulty with the Court, and there were many, always appealed to him for advice. In consequence of the attitude of William IV. towards her, the Duchess of Kent's position was delicate and isolated, and she naturally turned to a statesman who possessed the complete confidence of her brother, King Leopold, and whose advice she knew perfectly well was always disinterested. A rumour was industriously circulated in the summer of 1833 that the Duchess was educating the young Princess Victoria in high Tory principles, a statement which Durham denounced as a calumny. He himself did his best to broaden the quick impressionable mind of the Princess, who stood next to the Throne, and Queen Victoria never forgot, when once she escaped from the leading-strings of Lord Melbourne, how much she owed, in her shadowed girlhood in Kensington Palace, to Durham.

He it was who recommended to the Duchess that the Princess should master Harriet Martineau's 'Illustrations of Political Economy'—a book which made plain, by easy and practical illustrations, the significance and scope of the epoch-making principles which Adam Smith had given to the world in the previous century in 'The Wealth of Nations.' That great economic classic was the basis of modern political economy, and to it, more than to anything else, can be traced the triumph of Free Trade, which was itself one of the most bene-

[1] *Letters of Princess Lieven.*

ficent achievements even in the splendid record of reforms which is indissolubly linked with Queen Victoria's reign. 'I think,' said Durham in the summer of 1833, 'it is of the highest importance that the hopes of the great mass of the enlightened population of this country as to the progress of Reform should be associated with the accession of the Princess Victoria.' Nor did he conceal his opinion that the Duchess of Kent, alike on private and public grounds, deserved, as he put it, 'great encouragement' for the enlightened course she pursued with regard to the education of the young girl, who might be called at any moment to the most exalted position in the nation.

In the autumn, Durham, greatly recruited in health by a summer which he had practically spent in yachting, was back at Lambton, where a popular ovation awaited him. Always sensitive to press criticisms, the attacks of the Tory newspapers upon him were, at this time, so violent, and even outrageous, that he instituted proceedings for libel against one or two notorious offenders, a course to which he declared he was driven —and by which he was vindicated—because such statements, if unchallenged, would imperil the cordial relations which existed between him and the multitude of pitmen whom he employed. As a matter of fact, there was no large employer of labour at that time in the country whose workmen were better off, or one who did more to ensure the comfort and happiness of those who were dependent upon him. All sorts of ridiculous stories were trumped up against Durham at this time. He was said, for instance, to have hoisted the tricolour flag on his yacht, and even to have ordered the destruction of a village on his estate, because his carriage had been impeded in the street.

His best friends thought it a pity that he should have stooped to notice such absurd charges, and there

is no doubt at all that he was badly advised in bringing actions for libel on matters which a more cool, not to say cynical man, would have dismissed with contempt. One of the chief of his assailants was the easy-going and not too scrupulous Theodore Hook, at that time associated with the long defunct 'John Bull' newspaper —a man whose character was in itself enough for a statesman of Durham's standing to have been content to leave alone as unworthy of powder and shot. He believed, however, that he had been pursued, as he put it, by systematic personal libelling, and there is no doubt that he was the best abused man of his time by those who regarded him as little short of a Republican in disguise, and were unable to forgive his fearless attitude in regard, not merely to Reform, but to all the public questions of the hour. Durham, it must be admitted, pushed his grievance too far, but in the end, when the absurdity of such slanders had been proved, the charges were withdrawn, and the matter ended. But those who knew how liberal and generous, as well as quick-tempered and impulsive, he was, were the first to regret that such a man should have allowed his resentment in this affair to get—as it undoubtedly did —the better of his judgment.

The condition of the Grey Ministry in the autumn of 1833 was deplorable. Durham's retirement had not brought harmony to the Cabinet, as the events of the next few months were openly to show. It was torn by dissension, and to a large extent had lost the confidence of the country. It was, in truth, a house divided against itself which could not stand, and the Radicals were furious at the turn which things had taken, especially with regard to Ireland. Lord Grey was known to be in a querulous, dejected mood, and it was an open secret that he was anxious to seize the least pretext for retirement. Durham's disappearance from

the Cabinet, though avowedly due to his health, was regarded with suspicion. It was openly said that if that was the only reason for his retreat, he might have urged the same plea against taking office at all, for, apart from his bereavement, his health seemed quite as precarious at the time he joined Grey's Government.

His own position was one of extreme difficulty. He was determined to do nothing hostile to Lord Grey, though he shrank from further association with Stanley, Graham, and other members of his father-in-law's Cabinet, who, in his view, were dragging the Liberal cause into discredit. On the other hand, he had small sympathy with Attwood and other violent demagogues, who seemed to think that the Reform Bill ought to mean the dawn of the millennium, and whose reckless tirades were doing more than anything else to frustrate bold, though not revolutionary principles. If Durham was libelled by Hook and others, he had quite as much reason just then to be annoyed at the excessive claims which were made, without any authority, on his behalf by irresponsible people of another stamp. It was asserted, for instance, that Lord Grey meant at once to retire, and that when Parliament met at the beginning of the year Durham would be Premier.

Detraction and adulation alike proved how great a place he filled in popular imagination, and yet, to his credit, when the Ministry seemed going to pieces it was Durham who came to its rescue. His speech at Gateshead—October 23, 1833—was heralded by a dramatic incident, and resolved itself into a vigorous defence of Lord Grey. Attwood, Larkin, Doubleday, and other ultra-Radicals tried to break up the meeting, because they had persuaded themselves that the dinner in Durham's honour was a packed affair, though they were careful, as they put it in a manifesto issued at the time, to exonerate him from 'all suspicion of direct dictation'

as regards the speeches to be made at the banquet. This did not prevent Attwood from trying to bring about an open conflict between the Whigs and the Radicals. He sought to force Durham's hand by an address—passed at an informal meeting in the afternoon—in which the aristocracy and landlords were denounced, and a peremptory demand was made for the adoption of the ballot and triennial Parliaments. Lord Durham, however, was not to be drawn. He had not been apprised of the address, he said, and declined to receive it at a moment's notice, and Attwood and a noisy mob at his heels were compelled to retire in chagrin.

Durham was not the man to be dictated to, either by the Court or the crowd, and yet his speech that night showed that there was no man in England who was more thoroughly alive to the situation. He stated that he had resisted the noisy and extreme members of the party as far back as 1820, and to the last hour of his life he would resist men whose principles were at variance with rational freedom and constitutional government. He knew them to be the enemies of the people, and he made it plain that he thought them to be the worst foes of the liberty which they so loudly professed. The Chairman, Mr. Cuthbert Ripon, M.P., hinted that Durham had a great deal to do with the passing of the Reform Bill, and Durham said that as this was the first occasion since he had left office at which he had spoken in public, he would affect no mystery about that subject.

'I will not conceal from you that immediately after the formation of the Government, Lord Grey did entrust to me, personally, the preparation of that measure. I was assisted in that task with the advice of three of my colleagues—Lord John Russell, Sir James Graham, and Lord Duncannon; and with their co-operation the first

Reform Bill was submitted to the Cabinet and the Sovereign. Of that measure I shall say no more than that, if it was not entirely perfect, it was, at the same time, free from any of those imperfections which attended the passing of the second Reform Bill, and which, from accidental causes, it was impossible to guard against. I allude, in particular, to the 50*l.* tenants clause, which was forced upon the supporters of the Bill by the then Tory House of Commons before it was reformed, and afterwards inserted in the second measure, contrary to the principles on which the first was framed, or, at least, upon which I framed it—namely that independence should be the security for a vote.

'It was little matter how small the property was; provided the voter could exercise an independent suffrage, he should be entitled to have a voice in the choice of representatives. It is needless for me to tell you that circumstances, to which I cannot and dare not further allude, prevented my attending in my place in Parliament during the discussion of the first measure, and from having anything to do with the formation of the second. When it did come before the House of Lords, I supported it to the best of my ability, knowing that, with all its imperfections on its head, it was the greatest charter of public liberty, and the greatest renovation of the Constitution that any Government had ever staked its existence upon, or that the two Houses of Parliament ever ventured to pass into a law.'

After laying stress on what in his opinion were the defects of the Reform Bill, Durham went on to show how great was the debt which the nation owed to the Prime Minister: 'When I make reference to the part which I have taken with respect to the Reform Bill, do I mean to claim any particular credit to myself for that measure? Certainly not. However I may have added to its leading principles, however diligent

I may have been in the formation of it, however obstinately I may have stuck to some of its clauses, I was but the humble instrument of carrying into effect the will of one who staked his credit and the reputation of a long life upon the success of the measure, and only took office upon condition of carrying the question. The person who possesses this claim to the gratitude of the people of England is one man, and one only, and that is—Lord Grey.'

He admitted that a spirit of restless discontent was abroad in the country, but held that the best mode of allaying it, nay, the only mode of doing so, was for 'the Crown and the Government to go cordially along with the people,' a statement which called forth the utmost enthusiasm.

'I know of nothing that the intelligence of the country—not the property but the intelligence—has set its heart upon, and which it ought to possess, that it will not eventually obtain. I therefore say it is the duty of a wise statesman to examine the objects the people have in view, and what they are determined to obtain; and when he is satisfied of their justice he should not wait to be forced into the adoption of such measures; he should not do it upon expediency or compulsion, but grant it freely and cordially; for, believe me, that the boon granted upon compulsion, however the object may be obtained, loses half its grace, and very often all its value.'

The proposition that not property but intelligence should have ascendency, though a truism to-day, was all the more necessary just then, because Lord Durham knew that one of the arguments used by some of the Whigs against the adoption of the ballot, which he had vainly tried to introduce into the Reform Bill, was that such a method of voting would make the electors independent of the landed gentry. He frankly acknow-

ledged in this Gateshead speech that the Reform Bill contained 'many imperfections,' which ought to be remedied, for he had no sympathy whatever with the view that Lord John Russell afterwards expressed as to 'finality' in such a direction. His final words were a defence of the Government, and they came with added force because he was no longer in office and had nothing to lose—the Radicals were never tired of declaring that on the contrary he had everything to gain—by the embarrassment of the Grey Ministry.

Driven from the Cabinet, as he believed himself to have been, by a policy in regard to Ireland which he was powerless to control, he held his peace on that subject, and magnanimously dwelt only on the work of the Grey Ministry with which he was in agreement, for he knew perfectly well that, if the existing Government was overthrown, the return of the Tories to power was a foregone conclusion. At the same time he did not omit a significant note of warning.

'However we may disapprove of some of the measures they have introduced into Parliament, and to which they themselves were driven by dire necessity, we must not forget the great difficulties which pressed upon them from all sides. We must remember the great services they have performed, and not be too ready to believe, if they do not advance with the same speed that we wish them, that they are less sincere in their intentions. They have done a great deal in their simple contribution of the Reform Bill; and they did a great deal even in the last session; in particular they introduced the important measure of Corporation Reform. By that measure they have placed in your hands the power to root out those nests of corruption which have so long oppressed the country; and by that alone they have done much, if they had done nothing else, to entitle them to your approbation.

They have, however, done many other things that deserve your gratitude, but which it is not necessary for me to notice at this time. I only request you to consider the difficulties which surround them; and particularly that there is, at this hour, a majority of fifty opposed to them in the House of Lords, which the leader of the Tory party can bring against them in twelve hours, upon any question on which he may be inclined to oppose or damage them.

'You must bear in mind also that there are other difficulties not quite so apparent, but which are perfectly known to every practical statesman, and require great management and circumspection on the part of the Ministry. You are bound to consider these things, and when you have done so, you should support them when they do right, encourage them when they appear to falter or hesitate in their course, and oppose them when they are unfortunately in the wrong. At the same time, pay the just tribute which is due to their character, and especially to that of the illustrious individual at the head of the Government; give them credit for good intentions, and do not suppose that they would, in a moment, consent to tarnish their fame, and abandon their avowed disposition to consolidate and confirm the rights and liberties of the people, of which they have given such ample earnest in the Reform Bill. But you must recollect that you have also duties to perform. You must not confine yourselves to idle lamentations for what the Ministers have not done, or what they ought not to do. You must press upon your representatives the consideration of every subject you think desirable, particularly the important topics of Corporation Reform, the improvement of the Reform Bill, and Reform in the Church; and, though last, not least, you must firmly and strenuously call for a grant, and not a sham grant, to promote the great cause of National Education.

Durham's speech made it plain to the country that he stood then, as he stood always, as Albany Fonblanque said of him, on the frontier line of Reform. He believed in the ultimate triumph of the democracy, and never failed to assert that the people would succeed in gaining, sooner or later, all the privileges which they had any right to claim. He had the satisfaction of knowing that the immediate result of his speech was to arrest for the moment, at least, the rising tide of Liberal disaffection in the country, which threatened the existence of the Government. It was said a few weeks before the Gateshead banquet that a public meeting to support them could not be possibly got up in any part of the kingdom. They were openly derided as a sort of stop-gap for the Tories, a few deal boards—as one of their critics put it—stuck upon the top of the dyke in Dutch fashion to withstand if possible the overflow of the waters. Durham turned what was meant as a purely personal demonstration into a chivalrous act of defence.

Immediately after the Gateshead banquet it was publicly stated, in order to discredit him, that he had been made a peer by the Duke of Wellington, a statesman who, more than anyone else, represented the policy to which he was most opposed and had fought to the last ditch against the Reform Bill. This assertion, which Durham denounced as false, was quickly bruited abroad, and drew from him an account of what actually happened, which has already been cited in these pages.

The charge that he had accepted his peerage from Wellington having been disposed of, Durham was next attacked in print for having accepted a peerage at all. It was said, what had he, as a popular member of the House of Commons, and the head of one of the most ancient families in the country, to do with such an honour? Why should the honoured name of Lambton

be hidden under a coronet? This drew from him an interesting statement; it was made in a letter to Parkes, written just after the Gateshead banquet. 'It was always a dream of mine that I could do more in the Lords than the Commons to advance the cause of Reform. I saw that there was no one there who would call things by their right names, no one whose training in committees and parliamentary business could enable him to bring out effectively much useful matter, which might afterwards form the groundwork of efficient proceedings, and I proposed to myself to play that part. Shortly after my entry into the Lords, this opportunity occurred in the East Retford Disfranchisement Bill, when I elicited facts which were never before put on the journals of either House. All this was ready to hand for the general measure of Reform.'

A fortnight after the Gateshead banquet, the inhabitants of Sunderland entertained Durham at a public dinner, on November 6, in order to testify their approval of his political conduct, and he took that opportunity to refer to the criticisms which had arisen over his acceptance of a peerage. 'I know that, in this transfer of the sphere of my duties, I abandon the stage on which I might have perhaps distinguished myself more, and where, in the present state of parties, I might have gained more influence with my countrymen. But I considered that some benefit might perchance be secured by placing in that House one who was born, bred, and educated among the people (great and continued cheering)—one who, from early conviction, had felt that the main object that a statesman ought to have in view should be the happiness of his fellow-countrymen, not the attainment of any object of ambition, except so far as that should be connected with the advocacy of that grand and glorious cause—and to

defend the public interests amongst those who were not by education or habit inclined to attach so much importance to them as himself. Under these circumstances, unpleasant as was the task, and unpleasant as I found it, to be opposed personally to the habits and prejudices of those amongst whom I was placed, the previous education of the House of Commons enabled me, I believe, to perform more important services than I could have rendered my country had I remained fighting its battles with my friends in the Lower House. This much I do know, that the experience I gained in the House of Commons was very often of most essential service to me in the conduct of public business, and in eliciting important information when it devolved upon me to defend the rights and liberties of the people in the discussion of measures brought before the House of Peers.'

As he moved about amongst the people of the north of England in the late autumn, he was more than ever impressed with the distrust in the Ministry which was everywhere expressed. He declared that it was lamentable to see the extent to which they lowered themselves in the public estimation. He quoted, with amusement, an incident which had happened at the Gateshead banquet. A Newcastle orator was returning thanks to a toast in honour of the local members. His speech was dominated by the potential mood. 'May they deserve the confidence of the electors, may they do this, may they do that.' At last someone at the lower end of the table called out in loud and unctuous tones, 'Amen,' and no more could be heard for the shouts of laughter which prevailed. Durham, for his own part, had strong misgivings. 'I tremble at the thought of what the Ministry will perpetrate, in the suicidal line, in the next session.'

CHAPTER XIV

FALL OF THE GREY MINISTRY

Never was coach upset with such perfect 'sang-froid' on the part of the driver.—Bulwer Lytton.

1833–1834

Harriet Martineau—Intimidation amongst workmen—Francis Place—Durham establishes a Union of his own workpeople—Freemasonry—Edward Ellice—Aversion of the Whigs to an extension of Reform—Brougham's animosity to Durham—Brougham's scheme of Political Instruction—Durham on Nonconformist grievances—His support of the Cambridge University Petition—Protests against interference with public meetings in Ireland—Grey on his son-in-law—Poor Law Amendment and Emancipation Acts—'Johnny upsets the coach'—The Coercion Act—Grey's resignation—Lord Melbourne becomes Prime Minister.

Amongst Durham's guests at Lambton Castle, as the year 1833 was closing, was Harriet Martineau. She had recently published the first of her 'Illustrations of Political Economy,' a series of tales, in the hope that they might find their way into the hands of the working classes, and broaden their views of the relations of capital and labour, as well as quicken their demand for social, no less than political, redress. Her aim was to inculcate sound views of political economy through the medium of fiction. But, at the outset, one publisher after another laughed the notion to scorn. At length, in the spring of 1832, when she herself was worn out by anxiety and chagrin, and had realised only too bitterly that she had not a particle of literary influence, the project was accepted, in spite of the uniform discouragement which she had so long encountered. A

fortnight after the day of publication of the first of the series, so instant and complete was the success, that her way was open before her for life, though her struggle with poverty was by no means ended.

Durham was one of the first to recognise the lucid common sense and real grasp of affairs which Miss Martineau's 'Illustrations of Political Economy' revealed. He made her acquaintance, and was impressed by the modesty, no less than the merit, of the shy, careworn, homely-looking woman, who, in spite of ill-health, had read widely and thought deeply on the problems of the hour, and did not conceal her opinion that of all the weak points of the Grey Administration the weakest was finance. Durham invited her to Lambton, and out of that visit grew a lifelong friendship. 'We have here Miss Martineau, whom we like very much,' he wrote on December 12. 'She is very unaffected, as well as clever. I am procuring her a good deal of information respecting the system of strikes, unions, delegates, and the like, amongst the miners, which I am sure she can work up well.' He wrote to Parkes about the wider aspects of the subject, and the latter sent him a long communication from Francis Place, which was duly forwarded to Miss Martineau. The outcome of it all was the appearance in the following year of her well-known publication, 'The Tendency of Strikes to Produce Low Wages.'

Durham's mind was much exercised at the moment with the tyranny which the pitmen displayed towards any members of their own class who refused to fall into line in regard to their demands. 'I am all for the operatives regulating their own property (that is, their labour) as they think fit, but I am against their exercising powers of intimidation and punishment which place all other tyrannies that I have ever heard of far in the background. One of the union practices

in this county was to strip a recusant stark naked, and flog him through a village before the eyes of women and children. The jobbery and corruption of the committees is monstrous; fortunately, a book of their accounts has been discovered and placed in Miss Martineau's hands. In almost every instance, the only parties benefited by the strike were the committeemen, who enjoyed large salaries, and did nothing but preach in ale-houses. If this question is not seriously taken up, a more severe blow would be dealt to the manufacturing prosperity of this country than is now supposed to be possible.' Durham's interests as a great colliery proprietor, as well as a public man, anxious to obtain the moral support of the working classes of the north, might have led him to adopt another course, but in this matter he was true once more to that love of fair play which was the ruling characteristic of his life.

Harriet Martineau used to say that she had followed the career of Lord Durham, from the days of her youth, with unwavering respect and admiration, and when she came to know him these feelings were enhanced by strong personal regard. The arrival of Place's letter, on the condition of the labouring classes, reminded Durham that when he was getting up his facts for the Reform Bill, or rather for that part of it which referred to the claims of the Metropolitan Boroughs, Place had supplied him with useful facts. It is worth recalling, in passing, the part which this humble advocate of a great cause played during so memorable a struggle.

Francis Place was born in 1771, and died in 1854, but the period of his greatest influence was the twenty exciting and turbulent years which divide the so-called Massacre of Peterloo, in 1819, from the imprisonment of the Chartist leaders, after the riots of Birmingham

and Newport, in 1839. He was an honest, fidgety demagogue, who kept a shop at Charing Cross in the days when Orator Hunt was in his glory. He prospered tolerably well in the making of clothes, and when he was able to relinquish the cares of his business to his son, his ambition soared to the mending of the Constitution. He was a philosophical Radical—more or less—who had learnt something from Bentham and James Mill, and a good deal from a rough experience of the world. A self-made man, he had too much good sense ever to be ashamed of his trade. He had the courage of his opinions and the faults of his qualities, but he made himself a thorn in the side of the more laggard and supercilious of the Whigs. Consequential, opinionated, touchy, and at times truculent, he was, at the same time, straightforward, enthusiastic and shrewd.

He never threw up his cap for Lord Grey, for in his opinion he was not strong enough for his situation. As for Melbourne, Lord John Russell, Sir John Cam Hobhouse, and Spring Rice, he dismissed them as the 'live lumber' of the party, and it is quite possible that Durham himself was regarded by him with at best but qualified approval, for Thomas Attwood, of Birmingham, an ultra-Radical of a most uncompromising type, was, in his opinion, the man who most truly expressed the will of the people. He was, in short, one of the lively oracles of the ultra-Radicals, and, as he himself put it, his house became a sort of 'gossiping shop for persons in any way engaged in public matters, having the benefit of the people for their object.' Durham's verdict upon him has never been printed, and therefore deserves to be recorded here:—'Francis Place is a superior man, but why will he always wear a coat of bristles when he is in company with those who, by the accident of station, are his superiors in society? He is equal to

them in reality, and yet he seems to think himself always called upon to evince his sturdy independence and his contempt for artificial distinctions.'

Durham, in a letter to Parkes, written in January 1834, made it plain that he had not let the grass grow under his feet in regard to the terrorism which prevailed in the pit villages around him. He announced that he had founded a union of his own workpeople, in which 'all the ostensible and good objects of unions are attained without the illegal, disgraceful, and dangerous accessories, which rendered the others so justly obnoxious to all who value free labour and good order.' He was opposed to any attempt to suppress unionism by Act of Parliament, but he argued that protection ought to be afforded by the law against anything like personal assault, or the reign of terror in a village community, like that which he had described.

Amongst those who did honour to Durham at this period were the Freemasons of the North of England, who, on January 21, 1834, presented him with an address, accompanied by a costly Masonic jewel—a gold medal set in brilliants. The different local lodges assembled at Lambton Castle, where a Grand Lodge was constituted, and Sir Cuthbert Sharp, Deputy Provincial Grand Master, made the presentation. Lord Durham's association with the craft began at the dawn of his public life, and to the end of his days he was an enthusiastic Mason. He was appointed Provincial Grand Master of Durham in the summer of 1818, as successor to Sir Ralph Milbanke, and from that period until his death in 1840 he constantly presided over the meetings of the Durham Provincial Lodge. In a sketch of his career published by the Masons at the time of his death it is stated that he won golden opinions by his 'suavity of demeanour and love of order,' as well

as by his munificence. This is perhaps worth recording, in passing, since 'suavity of demeanour' is not one of the minor virtues with which Durham was credited. In May 1834 he was installed Deputy Grand Master of England, and in the last year of his life, when the health of H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex was failing, he acted as Grand Master of the craft. He was always glad to preside at Masonic functions and festivals, for he felt, as he put it, such gatherings mitigated the virulence of political controversy, and allowed 'one and all' to meet on neutral ground in social intercourse and for benevolent purposes, at a time when party strife had practically divided the country into hostile camps.

No man knew better than himself how apt political questions were to sever personal friendships. He was treated at this time by many of the aristocracy as a traitor against his own order, as a dangerous demagogue in a coronet, who sought to overthrow the Constitution. His quarrel with the Ministry over the Irish question brought in its train a degree of resentment from certain of his old colleagues, notably Palmerston, Melbourne, and Brougham, which was disastrous, not only on personal grounds, but still more because of the deadlock it created in regard to public policy. One of the keenest disappointments of Durham's public career was the rupture, in the spring of 1834, of his old and intimate relations with Edward Ellice, the brother-in-law of Lord Grey, who had done yeoman service as Whip to the Liberal party during the exciting and dramatic struggle which culminated in Reform.

'Bear' Ellice, to quote his familiar sobriquet—given because of his association with the affairs of the Hudson Bay Company—was a man of shrewd judgment and conciliatory temper, and a Whig of a more advanced kind than Lord Grey, though he certainly did not agree with the more Radical proclivities of Durham. He

held the post of Secretary to the Treasury in 1831–2, and that of Secretary at War from April 1833 to December 1834, after which, though he lived until 1863, he never again held office, or justified in other directions the promise of his earlier public life. Ellice cooled over Reform after 1832, and after the great measure of that year was not inclined to go further.

He resented Durham's ardour for further change, and was much more in sympathy with Lord Melbourne's protest—'Why can't you let it alone?' He was bored with the importunity of the ultra-Radicals of the Grote and Attwood type, and did not relish in the least the blunt talk in which they indulged. Although a much younger man, he shared to a certain extent the fatigued mood of his brother-in-law Lord Grey, and was not at all pleased with the persistent attempts which were made to jog that statesman's elbow. It was exasperating to men of his temperament and training to discover that the Radicals were not content with the progress already made, and he secretly winced at the manner in which Durham was proclaimed at public meetings as the only possible leader whenever Lord Grey's impending resignation should take effect. He thought, and he was not alone in thinking, that the 'Noble Radical,' as the populace called Durham, gave far too much countenance to the views of men who, from the Cabinet standpoint, were of small account, however much noise they might create at provincial gatherings.

In short, like the majority of the official Whigs, he thought that the Ministry had exhausted its mandate, and that further changes, at all events for the present, were to be deprecated. The Whigs were, in fact, afraid to face the situation which the measure they carried had created. They imagined that the people ought to settle down. Were they not now living in

the best of all possible worlds? The answer which came back to them—There is yet very much land to be possessed—was rude and ungrateful. So it came to pass that, annoyed and out of touch with the people, they straightened their backs, and prepared the way for their fall. No doubt the so-called plain truths of rough outspoken popular leaders, like Cobbett, were disconcerting. It certainly was not pleasant for Lord Grey to be told in as many words, 'You gave us the Reform Bill! We took it, if you please, and you held back as much as you dared hold back.' The Reform of the House of Commons was as much forced upon the Whigs in 1831 as the Emancipation of the Catholics was forced upon the Tories in 1829.

It is not necessary to challenge every syllable of Cobbett's indictment, but it shows what was the prevailing impression, and it reveals how completely the Grey Ministry had lost the confidence of the mass of the people. The distinction between the Whigs and the Radicals was too sharply drawn by both sides during the struggle. Grey, for instance, in his place in the House of Lords, repudiated any connection with persons 'called Radical Reformers,' and made no secret that he regarded them as enemies of the Whig party. At an earlier period, when the agitation for the redress of political grievances seemed hopeless, Major Cartwright asserted that the Whigs, when overtures were made to them to take up the question of Reform, seemed 'as shy as if asked to handle a serpent.' Some of this shyness still marked the party when it came to power.

Edward Ellice, undoubtedly, laboured hard behind the scenes, when the fate of the Reform Bill was trembling in the balance—far harder than a man like Cobbett was in a position to judge—and he, in common with the rest of the official Whigs, was not inclined to

yield a jot to pressure from without, especially when couched in violent terms. But it is at least certain that the prestige which the Government had enjoyed during the whole of the Reform struggle had vanished in 1834, and the feeling uppermost in men's minds was difficult to distinguish from an indifference which hovered on the verge of contempt.

As to the rupture between Ellice and Durham, it seems to have arisen through the misinterpretation by the former of a letter written by Durham in the spring of 1834. After Durham relinquished his seat in the Cabinet, Ellice continued to keep him informed of what was uppermost in ministerial circles. Gradually, however, these communications grew more and more guarded, and finally Durham, piqued at the tone of the letters, intimated that, as Ellice evidently did not think it worth while telling him more, it was perhaps best to cease the correspondence. Ellice accepted this as a hint that Durham wished to discontinue their friendship, and wrote back an angry letter, whilst all that Durham meant was that the politics of the hour should be no longer discussed by them. Durham replied in grateful and touching terms about Ellice's kindness to him in the past, and added, 'I lament that you have found the all-engrossing interest you feel about Lord Grey incompatible with the continuance of those habits of friendship which have subsisted between us for so many years.' He deeply regretted the severance, but agreed that it would be best for them to correspond no more. Ellice, though out of sympathy with Durham's advanced views, had a genuine regard for him as a man. Happily the rupture was not of long duration. Mutual friends interposed, and Lady Durham herself pointed out that her husband's words were not meant to be taken in the sense in which they had been read, with

the result that in a few months the two men met on the old cordial terms.

Edward Ellice, like Durham himself, was thoroughly honourable. He was incapable of a mean or underhand action, and, though he did not possess Durham's ability, he was less thin-skinned and of a more conciliatory temper. But there was another man—vindictive and unscrupulous—who, for some reason, cherished a grievance against Durham—though the latter at this time did not even suspect it—and that was Brougham.

It is commonly supposed that Brougham's animosity to Durham began with the Grey banquet at Edinburgh in September 1834. That, however, seems to be an erroneous conclusion. The truth is, Brougham never forgave the passing over of his claims in favour of Sir James Graham when the Committee of Four, charged with the preparation of the Reform Bill, was constituted. Durham was not aware of this feeling of resentment towards himself, and continued to treat Brougham as an old and trusted friend. Harriet Martineau, in an unpublished Confidential Memorandum, written in 1868, and committed to the charge of Durham's family, has given with great minuteness her view of the causes, no less than the progress, of a quarrel which had disastrous results at the time to Durham, and permanently detracts from the reputation of Lord Brougham. It will be necessary to quote this document at various stages of the present biography, and no one is likely to challenge its importance as the testimony of a contemporary, who was also, as her 'History of the Thirty Years' Peace, 1816–1846' attests, a shrewd and well-informed political observer.

Brougham's exclusion from the Committee of Four —he seems to have persuaded himself that it was at the instance of Durham—was evidently rankling in his

mind all through 1833. But here it may be well to allow Miss Martineau to speak for herself:

'Towards the latter end of 1833 I was surprised and troubled by the habit which I perceived to be growing upon certain obsequious companions of Lord Brougham of disparaging Lord Durham, in regard both to his abilities and his share in the production of the Reform Bill. The Bill, and the carrying of it, were still the subject of great complacency and triumph; but there was a tendency, unintelligible to me, to speak slightingly of Lord Durham in the midst of unbounded reverence for Lord Grey and enthusiasm about Lord Althorp. I had not then any respect for Lord Brougham; but I was unaware of his weakness (shown afterwards in "The Life and Letters of Horner" to be of long standing)—jealousy of even personal friends, whom he could more or less regard as rivals.

'At the close of the year I spent some days at Lambton, Lord and Lady Howick—as they were then—being there at the same time. One evening, Lord Howick and I were talking of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and he was startled to a degree which surprised me at my way of speaking of it, as being past its best days, and past hope as a means of instructing and influencing the working classes. "Was I sure of this?" I was, being so assured by the disappointment of the managers, on the one hand, and the discontent and indifference of the mechanics in the Institutes on the other. "How did I account for this?" By Lord Brougham being head of the Society. "How could that be?—was not Lord Brougham all-powerful with that class?" No, his influence in that direction was completely lost. I assigned reasons for the fact that, so far from following his lead, the working men had arrived at refusing whatever in the way of books, advice, &c., was offered them by Lord Brougham.

Whether their impression of him was just or not, such was the fact.

'Lord Howick immediately told Lord Durham what I had said and he followed me to the other end of the room to ask me what could be the meaning of it. I reminded him that Lord Brougham had had, as Chancellor, the fullest means and opportunity for above two years of fulfilling his promises to the people, in regard to political instruction especially, whereas he had not only done nothing in that direction, but had actually baulked them of the Political and Historical Treatises, so long waited for, giving them instead dissertations on the "Polarisation of Light" &c., &c. After going into this, Lord Durham said, in a voice and manner which moved me deeply, while I had full in my mind Lord Brougham's way of talking of him, "I have known Brougham long, and I believe that he has made many mistakes, and that he may make many more. But it would grieve me to the heart to think that Brougham was false." I could only reply that, whether he was broadly false or not, he was certainly not true to his pledges to the people.'

This conversation took place on the visit to Lambton Castle, already described, in December 1833. Durham seems to have had it in his mind when he wrote the following note, plainly the outcome of a friendship, on which as yet no shadow rested :—

'Lambton Castle : January 10, 1834.

'My dear Brougham,—. . . I am very glad to hear that you are returning to town. Occupation will afford the surest relief. I trust I shall find you at the meeting of Parliament quite well, and able to undergo the fatigues of the session. I cannot refrain from expressing my conviction to you that the country is anxiously looking for an extended measure of National Education.

It has been the object of your life, and the time is fast approaching when you will be able to consummate your great work. In this, and indeed in every other public object—for we have never differed in political principle and rarely in detail—you may command whatever support my limited powers will enable me to afford.

'Lady Durham begs to be most kindly remembered to you and Lady Brougham,

'Yours very truly,

'DURHAM.'

This letter was occasioned by the death of Lord Brougham's brother, whom Durham extolled in another note to his friend in the words 'a more honourable, patriotic, and excellent man never existed.' After expressing his sympathy, he added 'Forgive me for writing these few lines, I cannot forget old times and old associations, and I have myself experienced too many of these terrible dispensations of Providence not to feel that expressions of sympathy—from my heart I feel for you—sometimes alleviate the pressure of heavy affliction.' The writer of such words evidently cherished nothing but goodwill to the man who shortly afterwards stood revealed to all the world as his bitter and reckless foe.

The political vicissitudes of the Grey Ministry in the spring and summer of 1834 lie outside the scope of this narrative. The policy of alternate 'kicks and kindness' towards Ireland still prevailed, and, though O'Connell's motion for the repeal of the Union was easily disposed of, the defeat by an overwhelming majority of that proposal did not advance one whit the settlement of the outstanding question of the government of the country.

Durham was not idle during the spring and summer of 1834. On the contrary, he was much in evidence in the House of Lords, where he did battle

again and again for causes that were not acceptable to that assembly. On March 3 he presented petitions from various parts of the kingdom praying for the removal of Nonconformist grievances. He was not content merely to present them, but spoke in support, and expressed the regret that the Bill introduced by Lord John Russell in the Commons on the subject did not go far enough. On the following day he presented a petition from certain Protestant Dissenters, who complained that they were excluded by conscientious scruples from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and that the London University, the only one to which they had access, was without a charter. Durham, in pressing for an inquiry into Nonconformist grievances, went out of his way to pay a compliment to Brougham.

'If there was one part of the life of his noble and learned friend, which more than any other was the admiration of his fellow-countrymen, it was that which had been devoted to the cause of Education.' He felt confident, therefore, that there must be some cause, which the Lord Chancellor was powerless to control, which prevented the Government from granting this Charter to the new University.

Brougham stated in reply that the ancient Universities of Oxford and Cambridge had entered a 'Caveat' against the grant of a charter to this new institution. The consequence was that, before it could be granted, it was necessary that the objectors should be allowed to state their reasons before the Privy Council. Durham expressed the hope that, if these objections were not waived,—as they ought to be,—then, in spite of them, the concession, would be granted, since the 'spirit of the times' demanded it. On the same day he presented and spoke in favour of a petition from Birmingham on Corporation Reform. Two days later he presented a petition from the inhabitants of St. Botolph,

Bishopsgate, a parish which at that time was peculiarly burdened with local tithes. In a speech in support of the petition he did not miss the opportunity to express his opinion on Church Rates. These may seem in themselves but small matters, but they at least reveal that Durham's powerful advocacy, whether in office or out of it, was always at the service of those who had a legitimate grievance.

The new leaven of toleration, though it took long to leaven the mass, was already working in the older Universities, and notably at Cambridge, where a considerable number of influential men were altogether opposed to the retention of religious tests. On March 21, 1834, Durham spoke in support of the Cambridge University Petition. Those who signed it were not merely members of the University, but members of the Established Church. They asked that, as an act of justice, Parliament would relieve the Dissenters from one of the greatest of their grievances, that involved in their non-admission to the Universities. The petition was too remarkable to be shelved without comment. It represented more than one-third of the senate resident in the University, and was signed by Professors Airy and Sedgwick, two heads of houses, nine professors, and eleven college tutors.

The Duke of Wellington made the usual 'No surrender' speech, though in cautious terms. Durham said that the laws of the University, as the House was aware, excluded Dissenters from the advantages of degrees, with a view to the practice of the lay professions. He would ask the noble Duke one question. 'When he was Commander-in-Chief of that gallant and conquering army which sustained the glory of the British name through so many campaigns, and brought a very doubtful contest to a conclusion full of triumph, whether he thought it was likely he would have brought

the Peninsular War to so glorious a conclusion if he had been compelled to inquire, in the first instance, whether the officers and men who had served under him had subscribed the Thirty-nine Articles.' He proceeded to cite the German Universities, and their freedom from all religious distinctions and tests whatsoever, and declared that in no seats of learning were the sciences and every other branch of knowledge more successfully cultivated.

No one would surely argue that the Church of England could not exist 'unless it was propped up and supported by exclusive privileges.' All that he, as an advocate and admirer of the Church, would ask on her behalf was a 'clear stage and no favour.' It could not be supposed that, if these privileges were refused to the Dissenters, they would still willingly continue to submit to the degradation. No man in his senses could believe that that would be the result. 'No, the contest would still continue; the struggles of the Dissenters to free themselves from degrading disabilities would go on; they would be arrayed against the Established Church in a strife which would never cease, until that which justice demanded was acceded to by an enlightened toleration.' Durham concluded by the expression of the hope that the Dissenters, whose conduct he considered in the present instance most laudable, would not relax their exertions until they had obtained that which would do equal honour to all—the full concession of the rights which they demanded.

The next important speech which he delivered brought Durham into open conflict with the Grey Ministry. The occasion was on July 4, when Lord Grey moved the second reading of the Suppression of Disturbances Bill (Ireland), a measure about which his own Cabinet was divided. Durham regretted that he was not present when the Bill was introduced to

Parliament in the previous session. He felt that if he remained silent now it might be supposed that he was favourable to the whole measure, and that was not the case. It was with deep regret that he felt himself obliged to oppose that portion of the Bill which related to interference with public meetings in Ireland. The Bill would have received his support if the clause had been withdrawn which authorised an interference with public meetings in that country. He would not consent to arm the Government with powers which, while they were contrary to the Constitution, were, as he thought, quite unnecessary. He was willing to give the Government all the powers which were requisite for the suppression of violence and outrage, but beyond that he would not go.

Lord Grey, in his reply, said that so total and absolute was his dissent from his noble relative on the present occasion that, if he could not have proposed the renewal of the Bill with the clause respecting public meetings, he would not have proposed it at all. At the same time, he was sure that Lord Durham acted from none but honourable and conscientious motives. He recognised that he was anxious to discharge his public duties in the way most beneficial to the interests of the country. He was confident that every sentiment which Lord Durham uttered 'sprang from a pure and enlightened love of liberty, which sometimes led him to shut his eyes against the immediate consequences of freedom, but which was unconnected with motives of any kind, save those of the most unblemished honour.' The significance of such an admission is all the more remarkable because of the slanders which were industriously circulated at that juncture that Durham was not merely fighting for his own hand, but was plotting the downfall of the Cabinet.

The truth was, the Government was so hopelessly

divided on the Irish question that it retained office on little more than a tenure of contempt, and Durham's services, even if he had been so minded, were not required to bring about its downfall. There was a good deal of truth in the witty assertion that the Grey Ministry had been so busy making the people Radicals that they had contrived to turn themselves into Tories. It is at least certain that a considerable section of the Cabinet, in the spring of 1834, had outlived their old zeal for progressive legislation, and were inclined to look askance on those who were not content to take things easy. The greatest achievement of the session was undoubtedly the far-reaching and beneficial Poor Law Amendment Act, whilst the Act for the Emancipation of the Slaves was not less certainly the greatest measure placed on the Statute Book in the previous year.

The retirement of Stanley from the Irish Secretaryship had brought with it no real change of policy in regard to that country, for he was still in the Cabinet as Colonial Secretary, and was a man of too pronounced opinions to allow his political views to be ignored. His personal experience in Ireland counted for much with Lord Grey, over whom at this period his ascendency was remarkable, a circumstance which Durham had already had good reason to regret. Matters came to a crisis when, to borrow an historic phrase, 'Johnny upset the coach.' Mr. Littleton (afterwards Lord Hatherton), who had succeeded Stanley as Irish Secretary, introduced early in the session a new Tithe Bill, the object of which was to change the tithe into a rent-charge, payable by the landlord, and ultimately into land tax.

On the second reading of the Bill on May 6, Lord John Russell, fresh from a visit to Ireland, which had opened his eyes to the real situation, declared that the revenues of the Church of Ireland were larger than

necessary for the religious and moral instruction of the people belonging to that Church, and even for her stability. He did not think it wise to mix the question of appropriation with the question of the amount of the revenues; but when Parliament had vindicated property in tithes, he should then be prepared to assert his opinions in regard to their appropriation, and, even if his views on that subject led him to separate from his colleagues, he should still feel it his bounden duty to do what in him lay to secure justice to Ireland. Lord John afterwards explained that his speech was prompted by the attitude of Stanley concerning the permanence and inviolability of the Irish Church. He was afraid that, if Stanley's statement was allowed to pass in silence by his colleagues, the Government would be regarded as pledged to the maintenance, in their existing shape, of the temporalities of a Church, which did not represent the religious convictions of the vast majority of the Irish people.

Lord John's speech forced to the front the question over which the Cabinet had long wrangled in secret, and its immediate result was Mr. Ward's motion to the effect that the Church Establishment in Ireland exceeded the wants of the population and ought to be reduced. Brougham endeavoured to shelve discussion by proposing the appointment of a Royal Commission, but Stanley refused to countenance in any shape the principle of appropriation of ecclesiastical revenues, and, in consequence, retired from office, with the Duke of Richmond, Lord Ripon, and Sir James Graham, who shared his convictions. The Radicals made no secret of their satisfaction at the disappearance of such a quartette. Ward, they asserted, had exorcised the evil spirits of the Grey Administration.

But the King had to be reckoned with, and his support of the Grey Ministry, never really hearty, was now

strained almost to the breaking point, for his old prejudices and fears had re-asserted themselves, and were accompanied with more than a touch of petulance. The day after Stanley's resignation, his Majesty, in a significant speech, assured the Irish bishops, on the occasion of a birthday address, that he would defend their Church, an assurance which, of course, did nothing to lessen the tension of the situation.

When the Irish Tithe Bill had passed the committee stage, after interminable discussions, its further progress was postponed, in order that the Government might introduce a new Coercion Bill in place of the one passed in the previous session, the provisions of which only extended to August. Grey, to the indignation of the Radicals, proposed the renewal of the Coercion Act without alteration. Even Althorp, whose tastes were bucolic, and who detested public life, felt that this was going a little too far, and expressed strong opposition to such a proceeding. He had privately assured Mr. Littleton, the Irish Secretary, that the Act would not be put in force again in its entirety, and the latter, with amazing indiscretion, had communicated the intimation to O'Connell, whom he was most anxious to keep quiet, in view of the Wexford election, which was then impending. Lord John Russell, within the Cabinet, and Durham, without, were in keen sympathy with Althorp's protest. Generosity was not the strong point of O'Connell, and from his place in Parliament he took the world into his confidence concerning the secret negotiations between himself and the Irish Secretary, a matter of which Lord Grey was not cognisant.

Heated discussions, both in the Cabinet and in the House of Commons, followed, and Lord Grey, who felt that Althorp's support was essential, failed in his effort to induce him to pilot a measure which still contained the objectionable clause relative to public meetings,

against which he protested. Grey, on the other hand, was not less determined that the measure should be passed as it stood, and Althorp accordingly sent in his resignation, and this broke up the Government. Lord Grey was not merely old, but harassed beyond endurance, and accordingly he determined to tender his own resignation as well to the King, and in July 1834 announced the fact to Parliament in an historic speech, in which he reviewed the great achievements, in political and social legislation, of the Reform Ministry.

The Radicals felt that Durham would now be called to the head of affairs, but that was not his own opinion. He knew perfectly well that he was not a *persona grata* with William IV. He was too outspoken, too pronounced in his Liberalism, and too little of a courtier to stand well at Windsor. The King had not forgotten Durham's fearless insistence on the necessity of creating peers, when the fate of the Reform Bill was trembling in the balance. He disliked the manner in which Durham had pressed the claims of Leopold, both before and after his acceptance of the Belgian crown, and he looked with a feeling akin to suspicion at his position of trusted adviser to the Duchess of Kent and the young Princess Victoria.

Meanwhile the Cabinet remained, though Grey had departed. Althorp was willing to return—on conditions. One of the witticisms of the hour poked fun at a Ministry which had lost its head, and yet was prepared to go on as if nothing had happened. Greatly to the surprise of people—outside official circles at least—the King sent for Lord Melbourne, and on July 17 he became Prime Minister, a little more than a fortnight after Lord Grey's resignation, which had been communicated to his colleagues on June 29. He took over with misgivings, which were fully justified a few months later, an uneasy asset in Brougham, as Lord

Chancellor. The two men were utterly incompatible. Melbourne, by temperament, had nothing in common with a man who was shifty, gusty, and violent. Durham's prediction, made in 1833, was thus fulfilled. After the events which led to his own retirement in that year he had always asserted that Melbourne would be Grey's successor.

John Stuart Mill thought in 1834 that the best hope for the Radicals lay in their acceptance of Lord Durham as their leader. Mill asserted—in allusion to his defence of the Radicals against Brougham's sweeping tirades: 'We now see the importance of the rallying point which Durham has afforded. Any banner placed so high, that what is written upon it can be read by everybody, is all important towards forming a party. Durham has acted with consummate skill and in the best possible spirit.' Nothing came, however, of such a suggestion. Durham fell between two stools. He went too far to conciliate the Whigs, and he did not go far enough to satisfy the more ardent Radicals, who were in revolt against their provoking coolness. In other words, Durham knew the folly of extremes, and was too honest to conceal his convictions.

CHAPTER XV

THE MELBOURNE GOVERNMENT

Of politics I have nothing to tell you. The thing that at this moment interests and, at the same time, annoys me most, is the war that is going on between the Chancellor and Durham.
Lord Grey to Princess Lieven, October, 1834.

1834

Characteristics of Melbourne—Sydney Smith on Melbourne—Why Durham was shut out from the Cabinet—Disraeli on Durham—Lady Blessington's advice—Whig jealousy of Durham's influence—Disraeli's 'The Crisis Examin'd'—Grey's campaign in the north—Brougham's political vapourings, and his speech at the Edinburgh Banquet—Durham's speech—Brougham's insinuations at Salisbury, and his attack on Durham in the 'Edinburgh Review'—Durham's reception at Dundee—The 'Times' on Brougham's insinuations.

LIKE Palmerston, who was his schoolfellow at Harrow and his colleague under Canning, Melbourne began life as a dandy, and ended it as a statesman with a keen sense of public duty. He was not a great speaker, nor did he possess any conspicuous administrative skill. His oratory was florid in style, and the reverse of vigorous in thought at a time when Fox was relinquishing public life, and it had scarcely altered for the better when Gladstone, as a 'stern unbending Tory,' was beginning to attract attention in the political sphere. Melbourne lacked the clean-cut convictions of Grey, the versatility, to say nothing of the vituperative powers, of Brougham, the unassuming sagacity of Althorp, the militant self-assertion of Palmerston, the jaunty self-confidence of Lord John Russell, and the restless energy of Durham; but he possessed qualities of his own,

which in the cut and thrust of political warfare were not to be despised. Grey had not a particle of humour in his constitution, Brougham had not a particle of discretion, Althorp lacked audacity, Palmerston scarcely knew how to give way gracefully, Lord John left the impression—though it was quite erroneous—of being unsympathetic outside the range of his immediate associates, whilst Durham, with the best intentions, had an unfortunate knack of stroking people the wrong way.

Born a Whig, bred a courtier, Melbourne was by no means inclined to political rashness. Constitutionally indolent, frankly fond of pleasure, he cultivated a gay philosophy of life, and his happy temperament, easy nonchalance, quick sense of humour, and ready tact go far to account for his sudden passport to power. No one ever accused him of ardent predilections; he had no pet crotchets to expound, his scruples were easy, his convictions slight. He was a sheer opportunist, who accepted the world as it stood, and was not a bit inclined to jog the wheels of progress. 'It's all the same to me,' was his constant and characteristic remark. The policy which philosophical Radicals of the school of Bentham advocated seemed to Melbourne rank nonsense. The State economy, which Joseph Hume persistently demanded, was to him a short-sighted and pettifogging blunder; the fierce Radicalism, of which men of the stamp of Cobbett and Hunt were the great luminaries, he described as 'mere ragamuffinism'; whilst Durham, in his eyes, was an impatient visionary, and angular into the bargain.

Sydney Smith described Melbourne as a man of good principle and good understanding, disguised in the eternal and somewhat wearisome affectation of a political *roué*. He added that anyone might suppose from Melbourne's manner that he was playing at chuck-

farthing with human happiness, that he would giggle away the Great Charter, and decide by the method of tee-to-tum whether the bishops should, or should not, retain their seats in the House of Lords. In spite of the 'magnificent fabric of levity and gaiety' which Melbourne had reared, he, as Prime Minister, in Sydney Smith's view, was somewhat of an impostor. That shrewd humourist saw the better qualities of the man, and 'accused' him, in spite of his affectation of indifference and gay banter, of being guilty of honesty and diligence.

In a Cabinet of which Melbourne was the presiding genius, there was surely room for Durham. His presence in Downing Street would have brought strength to the Ministry in the direction in which it was most weak, but Melbourne disliked enthusiastic men, and Palmerston—and for the matter of that, the majority of his colleagues—were of the same way of thinking. Lord Grey, if reluctant, on personal or political grounds, to suggest Durham's accession to power, undoubtedly might have stipulated that Melbourne should offer him a prominent place in the reconstituted Cabinet. But Grey did nothing of the kind. It sometimes happens in less exalted spheres that a man's own relations fare worse—when the cards are shuffled—than those who have small claims upon him. Grey knew that the causes which had led to his son-in-law's retirement no longer existed. Stanley had quitted the Cabinet; the Irish question was entering upon a new phase. Durham's health was, to a certain extent, re-established, and his desire to resume office was no secret. Grey, for reasons which it is impossible now fully to gauge, did not stir a hand.

Melbourne came to power by a process of exhaustion; neither Lansdowne nor Althorp cared for the position, and Durham, who had unquestionably the

greatest claims, was content, so far as the Premiership was concerned, to bide his time. 'Our crisis is over,' wrote Palmerston; 'the Ministry is reconstructed, Melbourne at the head. The Radicals will be very angry that Durham is not brought in, and the Tories will be furious that Wellington and Peel were not sent for.' As it was, Melbourne would never have succeeded at that juncture except for the activity behind the scenes of Brougham, who told his colleagues that there was no occasion for them to retire, for if Althorp could be persuaded to withdraw his resignation, it was possible for the Ministry to survive the retirement of Grey. Althorp was willing to join the Cabinet, if modifications were made in the Coercion Act, and, this being conceded, the situation was saved.

'Nobody thinks the Ministry will last long,' wrote Greville. 'Melbourne is certainly a queer fellow to be Prime Minister, and he and Brougham are two wild chaps to have the destinies of the country in their hands.' The King was evidently of the same opinion, for he wanted Melbourne to put himself at the head of a Coalition Government, with the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, and Mr. Stanley as colleagues. Melbourne's political principles were tolerably lax, but his common sense was proverbial, and his Majesty had, in consequence, to accept a purely Whig Ministry, which, to a lamentable extent, was out of touch with the needs of the hour and the wishes of the country. Disraeli the Younger, as he then styled himself, was at that time halting at the parting of the ways in his brilliant career. He had a strong admiration for Lord Durham, and if the latter, instead of Melbourne, had been called to power in 1834, the whole career of the man who was destined to re-model the Tory party might have been changed. He declared that the Whigs could not exist as a party without Lord Durham, and was conscious of

the blunder which they made in not availing themselves of the services of a statesman of such wide views, and with so great and enthusiastic a personal following.

Disraeli began his public life, as all the world knows, as a 'mighty independent personage.' It seemed indeed almost a toss up whether he would be a Radical or a Tory, and it is notorious that he coquetted with what was called the Durham party in 1834. Durham, who had always a quick eye for ability, was willing to help him to a seat in the House of Commons, but Disraeli, in the end, drew back, and threw in his lot with the Marquis of Chandos, a Tory of the old school, who had nothing in common with the Radical leader. Gore House was the focus just then of the Durham party, and Lady Blessington was never so happy as when she had a crowd of young politicians dangling about her. Disraeli was one of them, and Henry Bulwer, afterwards Lord Dalling, was another. It would be interesting to have overheard the long conversation in the drawing-room at Gore House, on a certain summer night in 1834, between Durham and Disraeli, but we have to be content with the latter's statement—'He talked to me nearly the whole evening,' and the added comment, 'I have had three interviews of late with three remarkable men who fill the public ear at present—O'Connell, Beckford, and Lord Durham. The first is the man of the greatest genius, the second of the greatest taste, and the last of the greatest ambition.'

Lady Blessington was in the movement to an extent which is now scarcely recognised. 'Take care of yourself, take care of yourself,' she exclaimed to Durham; 'England wants you, and you will be called very soon to serve and save her. Look upon me as an old Sibyl who truly foretells events.' She used to tell Durham to beware of the Whigs, because they were jealous of his influence in the country. Shrewd men

of affairs, like Albany Fonblanque, shared that conviction. He told Durham that the common opinion of Tories and Radicals alike was that he was essential if the Liberal party was to retain power. He added that the great mass of the people 'look up to you with confidence and hope,' nor did he conceal his own conviction that Durham was the only statesman who could guide, and, if need be, curb popular demands. Other people wrote to him, urging him to strike for his own hand, telling him that a makeshift Ministry could not last, and that the Liberal part of the nation looked confidently to him as the pilot to bring them in safety through the storm. Durham was in no mood, however, to make reprisals. He had his own programme, and he knew perfectly well that Melbourne, who had taken office with a shrug of the shoulders, and had expressed himself as mightily bored at the prospect of its responsibilities, was not the man—unless outside pressure became resistless—to give him a free hand. He therefore accepted his exclusion from office with the best grace that was possible, though he did not conceal from his friends that he had almost made up his mind to retire from public life.

Disraeli issued a pamphlet in 1834, now scarce and almost forgotten, entitled, 'The Crisis Examin'd,' and in it he clearly summed up the situation. He sent it to Lord Durham with the characteristic letter which follows:—

'Tuesday: 31 Park Street, Grosvenor Square.

'My Lord,—On arriving in town I find the accompanying had not been forwarded to you immediately. I now enclose it. To save you the trouble of reading the pamphlet, I have scored the passage in question. I should grieve if you could for a moment have imagined that I could have ever spoken of your Lordship in any other terms but those of high and deserved

consideration. As for the opinions contained in these pages, they are those I have ever professed, and I should grieve if your Lordship's juncture with the Whigs and continued resistance to a party which has ever opposed me, even with a degree of personal malignity, should ever place me in opposition to a nobleman, whose talents I respect, and who, I am confident, has only the same object in view with myself—to maintain this great Empire on a broad democratic basis, which I am convinced is the only foundation on which it can now rest.

'Believe me, my Lord, with every sentiment of consideration and esteem,

'Your obedient Servant,

'B. DISRAELI.

'The Earl of Durham.'

The quotation in question—it is sufficiently piquant—is marked in his own hand in the copy which he sent, bearing on its title-page the autograph inscription 'The Earl of Durham, from Disraeli the Younger.' Other men there were—Palmerston was amongst them—who could only see in Durham a restless and dangerous innovator, but Disraeli, standing on the threshold of his public life, recognised the nobility of his aims, for to 'maintain the Empire on a broad democratic basis' was, in truth, the aim which Durham, through good and evil report, cherished. The following is the scored passage:

'The Reform Ministry! Where is it? Let us calmly trace the history of the "United Cabinet." Very soon after its formation Lord Durham withdrew from the Royal Councils; the only man, it would appear, of any decision of character among its members. Still, it was a most "United" Cabinet. Lord Durham only withdrew on account of his ill-health. The friends of this nobleman represent him as now ready to seize the helm of

the State; a few months back, it would appear, his frame was too feeble to bear even the weight of the Privy Seal. Lord Durham retired on account of ill-health; *he generously conceded this plea in charity to the colleagues he despised.* Lord Durham quits the "United Cabinet," and, very shortly after that, its two most able members in the House of Commons, and two of their most influential colleagues in the House of Lords, suddenly secede. What a rent! But then it was about a trifle. In all other respects the Cabinet was most "united." Five leading members of the Reform Ministry have departed; yet the venerable reputation of Lord Grey and the fair name of Lord Althorp still keep them together, and still command the respect, if not the confidence of the nation. But marvel of marvels! Lord Grey and Lord Althorp both retired in a morning, and in—disgust! Lord Grey is suddenly discovered to be behind his time, and his secession is even intimated to be a subject of national congratulation—Lord Althorp joins the crew again, and the Cabinet is again *united.* Delightful union!'

Meanwhile, the 'wild chaps,' to revert to Greville's phrase, had nothing to do but to wind up the session, which they did ignominiously, with the fear of O'Connell and his thunderbolts before their eyes. Melbourne was in power, but at every political banquet in the country at which Radicals foregathered, the toast which was most in vogue was—'Lord Durham and an Enlightened Administration.'

Towards the end of the summer Grey made, what his friends called, a triumphal march through the North Country. These political ovations began at Newcastle in August, and ended with the memorable Grey Banquet at Edinburgh in September. Alike at the start and at the finish of these demonstrations of popular goodwill, Durham was present, and on

the culminating occasion he delivered one of the most memorable speeches of his career. The Reform Bill had placed Scotland under marked obligations to Grey, and as he posted thither in the early days of September his carriage was stopped at every stage by enthusiastic crowds. It was the first time in the history of English politics that an ex-Premier had received such homage, and had made, in response, speech after speech to the assembled crowds. We are familiar enough in these democratic days with great political demonstrations, but seventy years ago such an outburst of enthusiasm was altogether remarkable. Lord Grey, on his arrival in Edinburgh on September 15, was presented with the Freedom of the City, as well as with addresses from all the chief towns and trades of Scotland. In the evening, as no hall in the city was large enough to hold all who were wishful to be present, the memorable Reform Banquet was held in a temporary pavilion, which had been hastily erected to accommodate the vast crowd.

There were upwards of two thousand seven hundred people present. The Earl of Rosebery was in the chair, supported by many of the Scottish nobility, as well as by Cabinet Ministers in the late Grey Administration. The enthusiasm in the streets was acknowledged, even by the Tories, to have been greater than that which marked George IV.'s visit some years earlier to Edinburgh. No one was more astonished than Lord Grey himself at such a reception. He had retired from office, as he said himself at the time, because he had been baffled in an attempt to carry a measure—the Irish Coercion Act—which he thought necessary, though he feared it might destroy his popularity. He added that he was retiring at an age which made his return to power impossible, and therefore he felt that the gratitude which Scotland evinced was not of the kind which rests on a lively sense of favours yet to come.

His triumph was, in truth, the triumph of character—the outcome of life-long consistency to the great principles of peace, retrenchment, and reform. North of the Tweed, as well as south of it, there was no lack of disappointment at the closing episodes of his career as a Minister, but that did not diminish the popular recognition of his great and disinterested services, as a whole, to the cause of progress. He preached at Edinburgh, as he had preached at every town where his carriage had been stopped on his way thither, the approved Whig gospel of moderation, and it would be idle to ignore the fact that the more advanced Liberals, who regarded the Reform Bill as merely a splendid beginning, and were in consequence by no means inclined to rest and be thankful, were disappointed with his cool and cautious survey of the political situation. He himself admitted that his speech was 'uniformly and strongly conservative, in the truer sense of the word.'

Brougham was present on the occasion—as an unwelcome guest, at all events, to the statesman in whose honour all were assembled. Grey knew perfectly well the discreditable political intrigues of his former colleague, who had notoriously fought for his own hand when the fate of the late Ministry was trembling in the balance. He was aware that Brougham had done his best to undermine his influence. The Chancellor at that moment had just finished a small political campaign of his own in the north of Scotland, in which he had made himself supremely ridiculous by boasting of his relations with the King. He declared that he had experienced from his Majesty 'only one series of gracious condescensions, confidences and favours.' He declared at Inverness, to the amazement of the honest burgesses, who had gathered to listen to his harangue, that he had discovered that William IV. lived in their

hearts, and he felt sure that his Majesty would receive that intelligence with 'pure and unmixed satisfaction when he told him, as he would do by that night's post, of such a gratifying circumstance.'

Brougham's bombastic nonsense gratified neither the Court nor the crowd. His foolish talk awakened indignation in one quarter and ridicule in the other. The 'Times' declared that there could not be a 'more revolting spectacle than for the highest law-officer of the Empire to be travelling about like a quack doctor through the provinces, puffing himself and his little nostrums, and degrading the Government of which he had the honour to be a member.' One shrewd and competent spectator of his escapades in Scotland in the autumn of 1834 did not hesitate to say that he behaved like a madman, for he was smarting at the moment under a combination of irritations, and felt that the ground was slipping beneath his feet. He kindled by these exhibitions, asserted another critic of the period, the unquenchable laughter of his opponents, and made himself the continual terror of his friends.

He appeared at the Grey Banquet at Edinburgh just before the reception, which preceded that event, was ending, and walked straight up to the guest of the evening. When he came close to Lord Grey he held out his hand, but the latter drew himself up and made no sign of recognition, and looked, as an eye-witness of the scene expressed it, a calm repulse. Brougham winced, and turned aside to somebody else, and Grey did not exchange a word with him the whole evening, though Brougham openly courted his attention. His opportunity came, however, with the toast of the 'Health of the Lord Chancellor and His Majesty's Ministers,' to which he responded. He took the opportunity of extolling Lord Grey to the skies, and then proceeded to admonish those who were too hasty to press forward

'The Cause of Reform.' With evident allusion to Lord Durham, and with an ostentatious parade of political integrity, he said: 'My fellow citizens of Edinburgh, these hands are clean in taking office; holding it and retaining it I have sacrificed no feeling of a public nature; I have deserted no friends, I have abandoned no principle; I have stood in the way of no man's fair pretensions to promotion; I have not abused the ear of my master, and I have not deserted the people.' He proceeded to repudiate the attacks of people whom he described as hasty spirits—'men of great honesty, of much zeal, and of no reflection at all,' who refused to wait to 'put the linch-pins into the wheel.'

The toast of 'Lord Durham and the Reformers of England' quickly followed, and was received with tremendous cheering. In his reply, Durham said that it was idle to suppose that the great tide of the improvement which the Reform Bill had set moving could be arrested in its progress. He added: 'I have now been more than twenty years in public life, and during the whole of that period I have ever felt it to be a duty and a pleasure to act with my noble relative whom you are honouring this night—differing from him occasionally, as all men do, who have any pretensions to independence, but following him steadily in the great objects of his political life.' He proceeded to explain what he believed Grey's object had always been—effective, unflinching, but safe and practicable reforms, and not least, with just regard to other interests, the extension of the privileges of the people, and their adaptation to the increased and increasing intelligence of the age.

'I know very well that there are some conscientious people who differ from us; but in my humble judgment, these are the best, and indeed the only means by which can be maintained that security of property,

that protection of industry, and that permanence in the institutions of the country, which are, all united, so essential to its prosperity. I am aware that there are men who think that we feel considerable apprehension from the increasing privileges given to classes who have not hitherto enjoyed them. I feel no such distrust. They have proportionally as much at stake as we have; they are as much interested in the preservation of tranquillity as we are. I look at their industry and intelligence, and I repose perfect confidence in their conduct.' He went on to assert that far back in the annals of the nation, Government went on without the people; next, it went on in defiance of the people; and that now, the experiment has been made whether it could not go on with the people.

Then he proceeded to take up the challenge which Brougham had thrown down. 'My noble and learned friend, the Lord Chancellor, has been pleased to give some sound advice to certain classes of persons, of whom, I confess, I know nothing, except that they are persons whom he considers evince too much impatience. I will freely own to you that I am one of those who see with regret every hour which passes over the existence of acknowledged but unreformed abuses'—a statement which was received, according to contemporary accounts, with 'rapturous applause,' and was afterwards printed in letters of gold, and circulated broadcast throughout the kingdom. Durham declared that he had no objection to due deliberation; what he protested against was the compromise of principles. He had no sympathy with the attempt to conciliate enemies who were not to be gained by 'clipping, paring, and mutilating' measures of reform. He added that, after this frank and free expression of the sentiments which he had never concealed anywhere

and never would conceal, he was ready not only to grant the right to deliberation for which Lord Brougham had asked, but to place confidence in the declarations made on behalf of the Ministry, made that night, and give to it such support as lay in his power. His closing words related to the excitement which prevailed across St. George's Channel, and he asserted that no one was more anxious for the welfare of that country than himself, and he accordingly proposed the toast of 'Peace and Prosperity to Ireland,' a sentiment which was received with the utmost enthusiasm.

One competent observer of the Grey banquet regarded it as the 'fatal turning point at which the devil entered the jealous mind of Brougham, with results that were disastrous to the magnanimous Durham.' The newspaper reports of the time record the speeches, and some of them state that Lord Brougham sat, looking the embodiment of all evil passions, while Lord Durham, by implication, rebuked his political lukewarmness in a speech which at once became in portions proverbial, and as a whole a sort of political gospel all over the country. Brougham made no reply at the moment, but presently went to Salisbury, where from the balcony of the White Hart Inn he made, on October 10, a speech filled with veiled insinuations against Durham, which was talked of all over the country, and which it was impossible for Durham, with any self-respect, to leave unanswered. Brougham poured contempt on 'vain misguided persons,' who represented everyone as the enemy of improvement who clung to any one part, however useful, of the existing order of things, and he ridiculed those who could not perceive any difference between taking time to prepare and mature great measures of Reform, and being reluctant to it in any shape, and he ended with the challenge to those who held such views to state their case in Parliament.

Brougham, in his speech at Salisbury on October 10, 1834, whilst abstaining from mentioning Durham's name, distinctly referred to Durham and his friends when speaking of 'a set of persons, who cannot perceive any difference between taking time to prepare and mature great measures of reform, and being reluctant to reform at all—persons who actually think that, because his Majesty's Ministers are resolved never to bring forward any plan that is crude and undigested, therefore they are putting off the day for preparing those plans.' He then proceeded by innuendo and insinuation to misrepresent and belittle the part which Durham and his friends were taking in attempting to procure an extension of Reform.

The 'Times,' in a leader of October 13, after quoting the above passage in Brougham's speech, remarks, 'Now, this was very clearly meant for Lord Durham, and in answer to the observations of that noble Earl at Edinburgh and Dundee; but we can protest, as lookers-on at what has been passing, that there never was in the world a more unfair and uncandid misstatement of any man's opinions, as inferred from his expressions, than the above attempt at a rejoinder by Lord Brougham. Why, Lord Durham's reproof of the learned lord's language was because the Lord Chancellor *avowed*, if there be any sense in words, that the Government "had done too much already." Was it not, therefore, reasonable to presume that they were not about to do anything more, or to prepare for doing it? We do not recollect Lord Durham's having recommended "crude" or "undigested" measures; on the contrary, he would 'wage war upon recognised abuses, and apply to them the best considered remedies.'

Everyone knew to whom he was alluding, and the 'Times,' in a leader on the speech, said that it could only refer to Lord Durham, and proceeded to defend

him from such an unwarrantable attack. But, as if this was not enough, Brougham, irritated beyond measure by the enthusiasm created throughout the country by Durham's fine saying about the 'reform of recognised abuses,' which was instantly adopted by the Radicals and appeared in large letters on placards, flags, and as a motto on the walls of public meetings, took up his parable in the October number of the 'Edinburgh Review,' which at that time printed anything he wrote without let or hindrance. The article in question was entitled 'The Last Session of Parliament.' It was, of course unsigned, but neither he nor the editor ever denied its authorship, and all the world attributed it to his vindictive pen. It contained charges of bad faith against Durham over the preparation of the Reform Bill, and, what was more, of dishonour, in the disclosure of Cabinet secrets. How it was met will presently be seen, but even at the moment it was not seriously treated, but dismissed as merely another instance, as men said, of 'poor Brougham's spite.'

It is not to the credit of Grey that he described Durham's speech at Edinburgh, which, by the way, was full of manly allegiance to himself, as 'very mischievous'—a sentiment which shows how completely the ex-Prime Minister was out of touch with the real aspirations of the party he had formerly led with so much devotion. Nothing, indeed, is more difficult to understand at this juncture than Grey's attitude towards his son-in-law in regard to public affairs. It can only be explained by the supposition that his own enthusiasm had cooled, and that he looked with petulant misgiving on Durham's insistence, in season and out of season, of the unredressed grievances of the people. It would be idle to deny that Durham felt himself continually thwarted and baffled by the great Whig leader, to whom he was so closely allied by personal

as well as political ties, and this circumstance requires to be continually borne in mind in any attempt to discover the hidden cross-currents which marked the course of events, in a year when the relations between the Whigs and the Radicals were strained to the breaking point. 'The Whigs,' was Durham's pithy comment on the situation, 'are a difficult pack to sort.'

Brougham made no secret of his intention to keep Durham out of office. He said, in so many words, that he would take care that the man with whom he had been in former years on terms of the closest friendship 'should never belong to the Government.' Durham was told of the remark, and his reply was characteristic. 'Be it so! Let the Government act properly without me, and I will support it, but if they shuffle and trim they shall not exist a month after the meeting of Parliament.' As soon as the article in the 'Edinburgh Review' appeared, Durham attributed it to Brougham's pen. 'The Government have declared war on me,' were his words, 'through their mouthpiece the Chancellor, and I must buckle on my armour. I will accept his challenge at Westminster, but he shall hear of me first a little further north.'

After the Grey banquet, Durham paid some private visits in Perthshire and Forfarshire, and, whilst the guest of the Earl of Camperdown, was presented, on October 4, with the freedom of Dundee. On his arrival in that town from Camperdown, the horses were taken out of his carriage, which was led along the streets to the Town Hall amidst the cheers of the people. As there was no building which could possibly contain a sixth part of the immense concourse who had assembled to do him honour, a platform was erected in front of the Town Hall, so that everyone might hear his speech.

The Provost read an address of welcome, and after-

wards presented him with the freedom of the town, and this was followed by an address from the Dundee Political Union, which contained a significant allusion to his consistency as a public man. 'In the present age, when some men have been raised to power and wealth by pretending to advocate the rights of the people, and seem to have forgotten the principles they formerly professed, we rejoice to see that your Lordship has sustained your high character for honesty and liberality throughout the varied situations in which, by birth and fortune, you have been placed; both as a commoner and as a peer, we still find you the same staunch, able, and uncompromising advocate of the rights of mankind.'

Durham, in his reply, stated that, although one of the privileged class, he had never regarded such advantages as worth anything, if along with them he did not enjoy the affection of all classes of the community. His aim, he declared, was not to destroy but to reconstruct, to amend and make the best of the institutions of the country. 'I hold that in our form of government, by King, Lords, and Commons, there will be found as great a degree of liberty as ever existed in any other country of the world, and as much rational liberty under the sun as any people can or ought to enjoy.' He ridiculed the notion that there was any danger of legislation proceeding too fast. It was not enough that the people had now the power of electing their representatives; they wanted to see the fruits of it.

Turning to the subject of Ireland, he laid stress on the necessity of a vigorous attempt to deal with the evils which existed in that country, the prosperity of which was intimately bound up with that of the United Kingdom. 'Centuries of misrule have not deadened the desire amongst the Irish people for good govern-

ment. We have only to pursue a sound line of policy towards them to make that country the source of riches and contentment, while at present it is merely a drag on the other parts of the Empire—an army of 30,000 men being required to keep down a people having one common interest with ourselves.'

On his return to Lambton, immediately after this wholly unexpected expression of popular goodwill, Durham wrote to Grey about the disclosures in the current number of the 'Edinburgh Review,' to which he was determined to reply at the great demonstration which the Reform party in the west of Scotland had arranged in his honour for October 29 at Glasgow. Grey admitted that the article in question was a direct attack on Durham, and did not conceal his opinion that he regarded it as a 'most unjustifiable breach of private confidence and of public duty.' He protested, however, against the public discussion of Cabinet matters. He took a stand on a broad principle:—'Were all that has taken place, with respect to individual opinions, on the various modifications, which almost every measure of government must undergo before it is finally agreed upon, to be exposed to public view, there must be an end of all security and confidence in his Majesty's Councils.'

This did not satisfy Durham. He felt the wisdom of such a view under ordinary circumstances, but Brougham's strictures passed the limits of fair controversy, and therefore the rule of silence ought to be broken in the presence of such a travesty of the actual facts. He yielded, however, when Lord Grey pointed out it would be a violation of his duty to the King to state at a public meeting what passed in Cabinet discussions, and, therefore, he felt that all he could do under the circumstances was to repudiate Brougham's charges in general terms, and to leave any

more explicit statement until the meeting of Parliament. He arrived at this decision after a visit to Lord Grey at Howick. One circumstance which weighed greatly with him was a letter which he received from H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex counselling forbearance. The Duke had known him from early childhood, and lost no opportunity of saying that there was no man who felt more warm affection towards him than himself. He expressed the pain he felt at the 'ungenerous attack' in the 'Edinburgh Review,' and declared that he was prompted to write because of 'sincere attachment to yourself and to the great cause which you have so nobly advocated.' Lord Holland also, whose opinion naturally carried great weight, deprecated, on public grounds, all detailed statements.

Brougham charged Durham in the 'Edinburgh Review,' of October 1834, with flagrant inconsistency. He stated that Durham, in his speech at the Grey banquet, in alluding to the necessity of further measures of reform, had said that 'there must be no compromise with the enemy—no abandonment of principles—no clipping of measures.' Brougham wanted to know how Durham, of all men, could use such phrases when he himself had approved of compromise and clipping respecting his 'large plan of Parliamentary Reform' of 1821, and acceded to the plan, 'of a perfectly different nature,' of 1832, which did not go 'a tenth part so far' as the former proposed measure. Lord Brougham, in his article, persistently dwelt upon this alleged inconsistency, again and again returning to the charge almost furiously, and attempting to hold up Lord Durham to ridicule. He, moreover, divulged matters privately discussed in the Cabinet, misrepresented Durham's share in drawing up the Bill of 1832, and allowed it to be understood that Lord John Russell was its chief originator.

The justice of such criticism—it puts the gist of the controversy in a nutshell—is so obvious, that it needs no comment. Brougham, as angry men are wont to do, had put himself clearly in the wrong. Durham had no belief in desperate remedies. He opposed the people, when they seemed bent on violence, or lent too ready an ear to revolutionary schemes. He opposed, with equal courage, the Melbourne Cabinet in 1834, when, in his judgment, they had cooled over the unredressed grievances of the nation. 'He knows the time for curb and for spur,' said one who watched him closely in those critical years, when his reputation, and the honour of the Whigs, seemed alike in jeopardy. 'False or foolish must any man be, who confounds the firmness of Lord Durham with violence.' Melbourne knew within a few weeks of Brougham's speech at Salisbury what was the humiliating outcome of such harangues. He declared that they had produced in the King's mind a sentiment of 'absolute disgust and alienation.' Early in the following year he wrote a letter to the ex-Chancellor which did not err on the side of a lack of candour. 'I must state plainly that your conduct was one of the principal causes of the dismissal of the late Ministry, and that it forms the most popular justification of that step.' It was a sharp rebuff, but it would be a stretch of charity to say that it was undeserved.

CHAPTER XVI

SPEECHES AT GLASGOW AND NEWCASTLE

Durham's firmness has no more connection with violence than the timidity of some of his contemporaries with prudence.

Albany Fonblanque.

1834

Durham's visit to Glasgow—Triumphal reception—His address at the Festival, and reply to Brougham's attacks—Seventeen speeches in Scotland in six days—Grey's disapproval of Durham's democratic utterances—Brougham becomes 'an itinerant mountebank'—The King's dismissal of Melbourne—Wellington carries on the Government—Durham's address at the Newcastle Banquet—On reform of Church abuses, and the stability of monarchical institutions—The Reform Act 'a means to an end'—Durham boycotted by the Whigs—Letter from Disraeli on his political prospects in Bucks.

CONSIDERABLE pressure was put upon Durham by the more timid of his friends to decline the Glasgow banquet, but, if he had had any doubt on the matter, Brougham's attack rendered it imperative that he should take the first opportunity of repelling, in the most public manner possible, the false charges which had been made against him. He was, in truth, in the position of the man who is thrice armed because his quarrel is just, and, though he yielded to Grey's judgment as to the impolicy of full Cabinet disclosures, he was determined to set himself right with the nation. He said himself that he had referred the matter to Lord Grey, as the head of the Reform Administration, and that he could not resist his decision. 'Lord Grey has embodied it in a letter, which I shall read at Glasgow,

declaring the charges in the 'Review' literal and circumstantial falsehoods, and regretting that I cannot in addition to my indignant denial of them, state the real facts, which would be an ample vindication.' To one of his intimate friends, who knew how impulsive he was, Durham exclaimed two days before his speech: 'Don't be afraid of me at Glasgow. He who is determined to speak the truth and has no sinister or selfish objects can never get far wrong.' Those who knew him best cherished no misgivings. 'Durham,' wrote Rentoul to Parkes, 'is armed so strong in honesty that these missiles will pass by like the idle wind, not altogether unheeded, but certainly without lasting injury to a noble character.'

He was in good fighting trim. 'Brougham shall find me,' he declared, 'an awkward customer, if once I get him on the ropes. I shall not let him drop till I have made him feel what a north-country blow is.' He made no secret of his intention, in dry allusion to the colours of the 'Edinburgh Review,' to leave him not buff and blue, but black and blue. There is no need to describe at length the wonderful enthusiasm with which Durham was received at Glasgow. There had been no demonstration of popular goodwill like it before, and there has been on the banks of the Clyde nothing like it since. The Press of the country was on the alert. There were more reporters present from all parts of the United Kingdom than had attended even the Grey banquet at Edinburgh, and from his first entry into the city to the moment he left it was one long and continuous triumph. The day fixed was October 29, and the previous night was spent by Durham at Dalkeith Palace.

He approached the city in mellow autumnal sunshine, passing through a triumphal arch of evergreens, on which was inscribed, 'Under the arch of Truth let

Liberty pass.' His carriage—one of his daughters, Lady Frances Lambton, sat by his side—was preceded by delegates from the various bodies of working men in the city, who carried the national standard, as well as a banner bearing the words 'The Time will come,' a translation of the Lambton motto. When the actual streets were reached, Lord Durham left his carriage, and took his place in the front rank of the procession, and passed on foot through more than two miles of densely crowded thoroughfares, until the Justiciary Court Hall was reached. He was presented with the Freedom of the City, and, accompanied by the Magistrates and City Council, proceeded to Glasgow Green, where a raised platform had been erected, around which a crowd of more than one hundred thousand persons had assembled. An address was read from the trade organisations of the city, which extolled his public services, and significantly ended with a contrast between him and others, who, 'in office, instead of rising in public confidence and esteem, miserably failed, even in common honesty.'

Durham's reply was marked by characteristic boldness. He declared that he was certain that that vast multitude would give him credit for dealing frankly with them, even if he refused to flatter their prejudices or follow the line of conduct which they wished. Though he might not be able to agree with them in all points, it was not because he did not trust them. 'Here, gentlemen, is the great difference between me and my opponents. They fear you; they do not repose confidence in you; their principles towards you are those of fear and jealousy—mine, I solemnly declare, are those of affection and confidence.' He was interrupted by a storm of cheering, and when it had at length subsided, he added, 'I could trust all that is dear to me in your hands; my life, my honour, my

property, I feel confident, would be as safe in your hands as in my own. I believe your object to be not the destruction of any of the institutions of the country, but the promotion of all that is good in them.'

He proceeded to state that he was at one with them in the demand for Household Suffrage, Vote by Ballot, and Triennial Parliaments. 'I have already in Parliament proposed Household Suffrage and Triennial Parliaments, and my opinions are still the same. As to Vote by Ballot, you are all aware that considerable difference of opinion prevails on this question. Some think it not advisable and somewhat inconsistent with the practice of a free State; but I tell you that my opinion is decidedly in favour of the Ballot.' He resumed his seat, to borrow the phrase of the official report, amidst most enthusiastic plaudits, and was afterwards presented with a great number of addresses of various trades, towns, and political associations in Scotland.

At six o'clock what was long known in the west of Scotland as the Durham Festival took place in a temporary banqueting hall, erected because there was no place in the city large enough to hold all who wished to be present. The chair was taken by Mr. James Oswald, M.P., and upwards of seventeen hundred gentlemen sat down to dinner. In those days public banquets began much earlier than they do now. At five o'clock, the seats having been allotted by ballot, the room was crowded with guests to its utmost capacity. At half-past six the Chairman proposed the usual loyal toasts, and those which were received with the most enthusiasm were 'The Duke of Sussex,' a life-long friend of progress, and 'The Princess Victoria,' who was already the hope of the nation. 'The Army and Navy' followed, coupled with the significant words, 'May Service and Merit be the only means of promotion.' Then followed,

'Lord Melbourne and His Majesty's Ministers,' and in quick succession, 'The Health of the Earl of Durham,' who was described by the Chairman as a 'statesman who had never swerved from his course, either to the right or the left, but who had dared to be honest in the worst of times,' a sentiment which was received with cheering, lasting several minutes, and only hushed when a glee party in the gallery sang some verses composed for the occasion, beginning 'Welcome, Durham, to our land.' The last of the ten verses may perhaps be cited:

> Pledge high to Freedom's Sacred Cause,
> The King, our altars, and our laws—
> The Press, our homes, our wooden wa's—
> Lord Durham and Reform!

When Durham rose to reply, the whole company sprang to their feet, and it seemed as if the cheers and the waving of handkerchiefs would never cease. Evidently struggling to suppress his deep emotion at such a reception, he began by saying that he was not sufficiently master of himself to thank them as he ought. He had laboured conscientiously in the public cause, he added, for twenty years, and was proud to receive the approbation of his fellow-countrymen. He went on to say that there were others who were less generous in their interpretation of his conduct, and the first great cheer came with the words, 'It may be perhaps on account of the too great favour which I find at your hands.' He told them that every inducement had been tendered to him to prevent him from accepting the invitation to Glasgow. 'I was told, forsooth, that I should find your principles too violent, and that I should commit myself by listening to opinions which tend to the destruction of all good government. I denied that I should find any such principle among the men of Glasgow, and I ask you fearlessly whether the

events of to-day have not proved my anticipations to be correct. I ask you, who have looked upon the immense multitude assembled on Glasgow Green to-day, and listened to the addresses presented to me, I ask you whether there was the slightest foundation for such a fear?'

He was answered by loud shouts of 'No.' 'Gentlemen, I must, in candour, say that the injustice meted out to me came only from one quarter of the country. You are all aware of the quarter to which I allude. I set aside for the present our mutual enemies the Tories. It is of the Liberals that I wish to speak, and amongst those who profess Liberal sentiments I know of an attack from one quarter only, and that quarter is the capital of this country.' The audience instantly caught up this allusion to Brougham's attack at the Grey festival, and his subsequent stab at Durham in the dark through the pages of the 'Edinburgh Review,' and, after loud cheers, settled down to strained attention. 'I ask you is that attack just, is it fair, is it founded on public principle? Is there any public principle which I have violated? Why then, if no public principle is concerned, why am I thus turned round upon and denounced as a tyrant in private, an impostor in public?' Here the speech was interrupted again by wild cheering, and then, in quiet, deliberate, but impassioned tones, Lord Durham proceeded, 'I will not seek to discover motives if they be not founded on public reasons. It will be too painful for me to reflect upon private motives by which attacks may have been prompted. But I will take this opportunity of doing myself an act of justice before you, my fellow-citizens of Glasgow. I will avail myself of this opportunity to justify myself against these accusations.

'I will state to you first what these accusations are. First of all, it is stated that I wished to propose a less

popular plan of Reform than that which was given to the people by the Government. I distinctly and positively assert to you that this is false. The next charge against me is that I willingly consented to certain mutilations of the Reform Bill. I shall prove to you how false that charge is when I state that I was not in England when those mutilations and changes were engrafted on it. I had just suffered the first of a series of calamities, which might have unnerved a man of the steadiest mind, and I had been kindly and considerately permitted by my sovereign to travel for a time to recruit my health and spirits. I was not, I say, in England then, and I cannot therefore be considered answerable for the alterations in the second Reform Bill.

'You are all aware, gentlemen, of the public contradiction which I have felt it necessary to make to the charges affecting my public character. After making that contradiction public, I felt that my first duty was to consult, upon the further steps to be taken, a person at the time alluded to, filling the highest station in the country, who had, as I think you will allow, a right to be consulted by me upon it. There is no man living who has a more complete case in vindication than I have. I placed myself in his hands, and requested permission from him to state every circumstance in my defence.

'I believe the shortest way for me to proceed would be to read the letter which Earl Grey addressed to me on the subject. It is as follows:—"Howick, October 25, 1834. My dear Lambton,—In answer to your desire to know how far you would be justified in stating publicly what occurred in the preparation and discussion of the Reform Bill by the King's confidential servants, I can have no hesitation in saying that, in my opinion, no such disclosure can be made consistently with the oblig-

ations of private confidence and public duty. Were all that has taken place, with respect to individual opinions, or the various modifications, which almost every measure of government must undergo before it is finally agreed upon, to be exposed to public view, there must be an end of all security and confidence in his Majesty's Councils. Having stated this opinion confidently and frankly, it may perhaps be satisfactory to you to add that, in all my communications with you on the subject of the Reform Bill, nothing occurred to cast a doubt on the consistency of your principles, or on your sincere and anxious desire to assist in rendering it a safe and efficacious measure. Believe me ever, my dear Lambton, yours most faithfully and affectionately, Grey."

'You will therefore, perceive, gentlemen, that I am precluded from stating those particulars relative to the preparation of the second Reform Bill which tend to the justification of myself from those charges, and you must therefore be content to take my asseveration, which I now solemnly make to you, that I am not guilty of the charges preferred against me. I wish also to take this opportunity of stating that another accusation, as unfounded as that to which I have referred, has been made against me. It has been said subsequently—as an excuse for the half revelations which have been made on the subject of the Reform Bill—that I disclosed Cabinet secrets when addressing my friends at Gateshead. I deny the fact. I refer such of you as take an interest in my public conduct to that speech as recorded, and it will be evidence against me if not correct. All that I stated was that Lord Grey assigned to me the preparation of the Reform Bill, and that I was assisted by three of my colleagues. Was that a secret? It might not perhaps be known in Durham, but it could be no secret in the metropolis, for all the memorials presented on the

subject, and all the deputations to the Prime Minister were referred by him to me. I saw the parties in my own house; I received there every information which I thought likely to elucidate the subject. Did I then disclose any secret at Gateshead? I say I did not, and I therefore again deny the charge that at any meeting I ever uttered a syllable disclosing, either what had been done in the committee, or what was subsequently done in the Cabinet.

'But enough, gentlemen, of myself. Let me direct your attention to the great public object which is the best justification of the honours you have this day conferred upon me. We have fought an arduous battle and won a glorious victory, but the enemy is still in the field, and in force, and we must not repose in the security of past triumphs, but must rise to the consciousness of an impending struggle. We must not suffer the Reform Bill to become a dead letter, or, what is worse, merely an instrument of party triumph. We must make it what it ought to be, and what it shall be—a great instrument of national regeneration.'

'You must require from the House of Commons the reaping of that harvest, the seeds of which you have planted, and the coming of which you have waited for with such exemplary patience. We have to require the perfecting of the Reform Act. We have to require the repeal of the Septennial Act. We have to require the purification of the Church Establishments of England and Ireland from all acknowledged abuses.

'I would relieve the Dissenters, and purify the Church from abuses for the sake of justice, and for the advancement of true religion. Is that attended with danger to the institutions of the country?' ('No, no.')

'I would reform corporations, so as make them what they profess, and what they ought to be, correct representation of local rights. Is that attended with

danger to the institutions of the country?' ('No, no.') 'No, I repeat the word you have given me, and assert that the result of timely and not too long delayed Reform is to preserve all that is valuable in an institution by removing all that is corrupt. These are my principles. I have never concealed them and I never will.' (Great cheering.) Lord Durham proceeded to say that he had been denounced in one quarter as a statesman who held destructive opinions, and in another as a man who encouraged the impatience of the people. He added that it was because he wanted to see tranquillity permanent, industry prosper, commercial enterprise encouraged, that he advocated measures which, in his view, would 'remove discontent before it has time to ripen into turbulence.' He ridiculed the notion that he was open to the charge of impatience, or that he wished hasty legislation. On the contrary, what was needed were measures fully considered, but not subject to mutilation and compromise in the attempt to gain over opponents who were not to be conciliated.

He went on to speak in generous terms of Lord Melbourne, and the difficulties in which the Government was placed. 'We have a Liberal Administration, professing Liberal principles, supported and maintained in power by an immense majority in the House of Commons, and yet with a Government, thus constituted and thus supported, the Ministry is surrounded in every department of the State by Tory subalterns, and the patronage of the Army and the Church is exercised by Tories for the benefit of Tories. These are appointed by bishops, by judges, by magistrates, and lord lieutenants, all of whom are Tories. The diplomacy of the country is composed nearly of the same persons, with very few exceptions, as at the time of Lord Liverpool's Administration. All the inferior instruments through whom the measures of a Liberal Government are to be

carried into effect are anti-Liberal. I ask you, gentlemen, is it possible that such a system can work harmoniously? Far rather would I have a Tory Government acting avowedly with Tory agents—for then our enemies would be before our faces and not behind our backs—than have a Liberal Government neutralised, checked and thwarted by those who ought to be the main sources of its efficiency. Am I not right, therefore, in saying that the Government is surrounded with difficulties? Upon whom ought they to rely? On the House of Commons and on the people who have once before borne them triumphantly through all their difficulties.' Lord Durham, having proposed as a toast 'The recollection of the glorious struggle for Reform,' linked with the hope that it might ever animate the people in the demand for, as well as in the maintenance of, their rights, brought his speech to an end amidst a storm of applause.

His own account of the proceedings at Glasgow will be read with interest, especially as it was written from that city two days after the banquet. 'I was so completely exhausted and knocked up with thirteen hours' hard work on Wednesday that I was confined to my bed all day yesterday, and am only just up and still very weak. I walked at least three miles with the procession, and had to make eleven speeches—three of them in the open air, to one hundred thousand persons—and I sat seven hours in the dinner room. I don't think I was ever so unwell in my life. To-day I am rather better. The scene in the morning was indescribably splendid. The immense population was out along the line of road for two miles. Every window of every "flat" was filled with heads, male and female. The sides of the streets were filled by close ranks. The Green was covered by such a multitude as I never beheld collected before. They told me upwards of one

hundred and fifty thousand people were present. The Council Room was filled with the magistrates, &c., of the town. Enthusiastic cheers accompanied me from first to last. All this made such an impression on my mind as never can be effaced. The pavilion was very splendid, and had the same effect as at Edinburgh. My reception was as enthusiastic as Lord Grey's. I dealt very lightly with the Chancellor, and gave the Ministry a good word, but I did not shirk the great question of progress which must be forced on them. . . I have declined going to Belfast, but I could not refuse my neighbours at Newcastle, with whom I dine on the 19th prox. I go to Hamilton Palace to-morrow, Chillingham on Monday, and Lambton on Tuesday.'

His daughter's letter, written on the same day to Lady Durham, who was too unwell to accompany him to Scotland, shows only too plainly how ill he was, not merely on the morrow of this great ordeal, but on the day of the demonstration itself, when it seemed as if it were impossible that he could prove equal to the occasion. She gives, with girlish enthusiasm, a lively little picture of her own impressions of the city and of the deputations, and the ceaseless visitors that kept coming to the George Hotel, and her words reveal the strain which such demonstrations imposed on her father.

Not only Belfast, but Manchester also wished to do him honour at that juncture by a public banquet, but he was compelled reluctantly, by the state of his health, to decline such flattering overtures. He did not get back to Lambton, however, without being besieged at every place where his carriage stopped by his political admirers. In a letter written on November 6, from Lambton Castle, he gives a brief but amusing account of an experience which suggests Gladstone's subsequent experiences in Midlothian:—'I returned home last night very much shattered by the campaign.

I had to go through a continued fire of addresses, deputations, &c., on my road. Every town and council turned out. On Monday morning at eight the magistrates at Lanark presented me with the freedom of the town. Speech I. The Trades with an address. Speech II. (Open air). At Biggar—the next stage—an address from the inhabitants. Speech III. (Open air). At Peebles—next stage—address from the magistrates, &c. Speech IV. At Melrose—next stage—I found a dinner just taking place of four hundred of the Reformers of Roxburghshire, with Sir David Erskine in the chair. Nothing would satisfy them but my dining with them. I could not find it in my heart to refuse, so stayed three hours in a room in which the thermometer must have been at 90°. Speech V. All this delayed me so long, that I was obliged to sleep at Kelso—the next stage. At half-past seven next morning, as I was about to slip away, in marched the magistrates with an address, &c. Speech VI. Here I am quite knocked up, and shall act on the "do little" or "do nothing" system for a few days in order to unbend the mental bow. I fairly own that I did not think I had so much in me, but I also think that much drawing on the fund would kill me.'

Seventeen speeches, nearly all of which were printed in pamphlet form, and circulated far and wide, some being of great length, made in six days, would have taxed the strength of a man in vigorous health, and Durham at this time, and, with rare exceptions, for the rest of his life, was so delicate that those nearest to him always dreaded any unusual strain on his physical powers.

Lord Grey did not conceal his disapproval of Durham's outspoken utterances at Glasgow. He went so far as to assert that 'no respectable person,' except the Chairman, had attended the meeting, which was a com-

plete travesty of the facts. Lord Breadalbane, with whom Durham was staying in September, when the invitation to attend the banquet was sent to him, glanced over the hundred names of those who had signed it, and remarked that they represented the 'first people' in the city and neighbourhood. As to the speech at the banquet, Lord Grey deplored that it was 'completely Radical.' The measures to which Durham had pledged himself he declared were of a kind which he was bound to oppose, and he even added that, if the Melbourne Cabinet did not repudiate them, he for one would not give them his support. The misunderstanding between Durham and Brougham he described as having now become irreparable, and he predicted that it would lead to an open conflict. The King was also annoyed at such direct appeals to the democracy. He wrote, through Sir Herbert Taylor, to Lord Melbourne, deprecating the practice which had suddenly sprung into vogue of 'giving great dinners, which are a sort of political assembly, at which topics are introduced which necessarily lead to recrimination when parties are split as at present.'

He was especially angry with Lord Brougham, who, unlike Durham, was actually in office and had by his blazing indiscretions at Inverness—where he introduced the King's name into one of the wildest of his harangues—excited the ridicule of every well-informed person in the country. Brougham's speeches at this time had not even the merit of consistency. He was a Radical at one moment, and almost a Conservative at another, and there seemed no bounds to the licence which he allowed himself. Shrewd judges had already begun to take his measure, and he had the mortification of finding himself treated, in quarters where he wished to stand well, as a negligible quantity—the most exasperating of any treatment to a man of real ability and

corresponding ambition. O'Connell, for instance, did not conceal his disdain: 'I pay very little attention to anything Lord Brougham says. He makes a greater number of foolish speeches than any other man of the present generation.'

Printing House Square was even more emphatic. 'His Majesty is known to entertain an aversion towards one individual—by courtesy called learned—of the Cabinet. Respecting him the King makes no scruple of speaking of him as an itinerant mountebank, who has dragged the Great Seal of England through the kennel, and degraded, by his unnumbered antics and meannesses, the highest offices of the law and State in England.' He was likened in another influential quarter to a quack doctor, travelling about the provinces, puffing himself and his little nostrums, whilst Disraeli the Younger described him as an 'overrated rebel,' and his speeches as insolence couched in 'language mean as his own soul.'

Durham's intention to rest and be thankful for a few days at Lambton between the political demonstration at Glasgow and the one to which he was pledged at Newcastle, was suddenly broken by the death, on November 10, of Earl Spencer, an event which, by calling Lord Althorp to the House of Lords, suddenly deprived the Government of its Leader in the Commons. Althorp, though he told Lord John Russell that he wished himself dead every morning when he awoke to find himself still in office, was not merely the peacemaker, but the good genius, at that distracted time, of the perplexed and divided Whigs. He was, in truth, the man of all others whom they could least spare, and his departure, to borrow the phrase of the moment, 'upset the omnibus.' The King, who had already vainly tried to induce Melbourne and Peel to join forces, seized what he regarded as an opportune moment

for the dismissal of the Ministry. He did not love the Whigs, and it is certain that he loathed the Radicals, and when Melbourne went down to the Pavilion at Brighton to submit Lord John Russell's name as the new Leader of the Commons the Royal pleasure was quickly revealed.

William IV. bluntly exclaimed that Lord John would cut a 'wretched figure' in such a position, and, waiving aside alternative proposals, curtly dismissed the Ministry, on the ground that, as the Whigs had arrived at such a pass, he intended to send for Wellington. Melbourne's airy nonchalance was never perhaps more sorely tried, but he accepted the situation outwardly with good grace, and drove back to London as the actual bearer of the letter to the Duke. His reflections during that ride in the dark, along the road through Sussex and Surrey, have, unluckily, not been recorded. It was late in the evening when he reached Downing Street, but he found two of his colleagues, Palmerston and Brougham, within call. He confided to them, under a pledge of secrecy, the unexpected turn of affairs, and the latter ran off to the 'Times,' which next morning came out with an article in leaded type on the subject, attributed to the Chancellor, ending with the remarkable assertion, 'The Queen has done it all.' That act of treachery sealed Brougham's fate. He was never in office again. Melbourne, with pardonable warmth, made it plain that he had done with him, and a brilliant career was, in the political sense, for ever wrecked.

The King, on the other hand, was justly incensed. The insinuation that the fall of the Ministry was due to a political intrigue between his consort and the Tories was a matter which he refused to condone. He peremptorily demanded that the seals should be given up instantly. It was a tactical mistake on the part of the

Crown to administer a *coup de grâce* to the Whigs, for the Ministry was already moribund. It was dying of a hopeless internal disorder, and the King might well have stayed his hand. Althorp, whose elevation to the House of Lords was the ostensible cause of the dismissal of the Ministry, described the King's action as the 'greatest piece of folly ever committed.' As it was, William IV. struck too hard, and, as always happens in such a case, he provoked a rebound. The Tories came into power, it is true, before Christmas, but held it scarcely for four months. Sir Robert Peel, to whom Wellington wisely gave precedence, resigned on April 8, 1835, and what remained of the reign of William IV. was spent with the statesman at the head of affairs whom he had so cavalierly dismissed.

Meanwhile, the Duke of Wellington, to whom the King had turned, advised that the task of forming a new administration should be entrusted to Sir Robert Peel, who at the moment was in Rome. The Duke offered to carry on the Government until Sir Robert's return, and this suggestion was adopted, Lord Lyndhurst being sworn in as Lord Chancellor. It was when this curious turn of the wheel was in process that Durham was called to fulfil his long-standing engagement to speak at Newcastle, at a banquet held in his honour by his friends and neighbours in the north of England. It took place on November 19, 1834, in the Assembly Rooms, and the chair was taken by Mr. W. H. Ord, M.P., who was supported by other local members of Parliament and the chief inhabitants of the town. The front of the building was a blaze of light, and prominent in the illumination—the first of its kind ever seen in the north—glittered, in gas jets, 'Durham and Reform.' He received a magnificent ovation, for his speech at Glasgow had shown that he was still 'Radical Jack,' and, as such, in complete touch with the political

aspirations of the great town, close to which his earliest years had been spent, and whose inhabitants had watched his career with pardonable pride.

He began by acknowledging the warmth and enthusiasm of his reception, and made it clear that he felt that it was all the more valuable since it came from his people who had known him from his earliest years. He found in that welcome an answer to the taunt that he was an oppressor of the poor. If such words were true, instead of being honoured, he would have been disowned. He rejoiced that he had the friendship and confidence of all classes, and declared that the welfare of the thousands who worked for him was the dearest object of his heart. He had been represented as a proud aristocrat, but he had the consolation of knowing that the hatred of those who thus described him was the best and surest passport to the approbation of all good men. 'I know,' he exclaimed, and the words were not merely cheered to the echo at the moment, but placarded on many a Radical manifesto in after days, 'I know that there is as much sound sense, true honour, and real independence to be found under the coarse working jacket of the mechanic as beneath the ermine robe of the peer.' Everyone admits as much to-day, but when Durham made that declaration the rule of the common people was just beginning, and there were few in high places who credited the 'common herd,' as they were contemptuously termed, with the possession of such qualities.

'Gentlemen,' he continued, 'I have already alluded to the reception which I have met with in other parts of the country. It is impossible for me to describe the splendour of the scene that I witnessed in Glasgow. To see the immense population of that great commercial city, to the number of one hundred and fifty thousand, pouring forth in order, harmony, and goodwill,

entertaining strong political feelings with respect to all that passed around them; feeling perhaps too strongly the degradation in which they were placed; and yet, with all these temptations and incitements to violence, not a single word was uttered that could disturb the ear of the most timid alarmist. Since I came back from Scotland I am more proud than ever of my countrymen, impressed as I am with the strongest conviction of the good sense and feeling of the people. On that occasion I was received by the working classes with addresses, embodying their sentiments and wishes, and particularly referring to those demands, or rather claims, which they conceived they had a right to make on the Legislature of the country.

'I felt it my duty to give them every information in my power as to my sentiments with regard to the great and important subjects to which they referred. I allude more particularly to one part of their address, namely, that which contained a statement in favour of Household Suffrage, Shortening the Duration of Parliaments, and the Ballot, and, if I refer to them now, it is for the purpose of stating to you more explicitly than I was enabled to do at that time what I meant when I responded to such sentiments.' He proceeded to show that he had supported Household Suffrage in the House of Commons as far back as 1821. He did not claim to have originated such a demand. It was first proposed in the Declaration of the Friends of the People in 1791, of which his father was the chairman. Statesmen like Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Erskine, and Grey had all advocated Household Suffrage, and the House of Commons had twice declared that 'of common right, all the inhabitant householders and residents within a borough ought to have a voice in an election.'

As to the Shortening of the Duration of Parliaments, there was no need to argue the matter, since all

Liberals were agreed upon such a point. No such unanimity existed, however, with regard to the Ballot, but his own opinion was that it was the surest safeguard against political corruption, and the best protection to that independent exercise of the right of voting which is absolutely necessary to ensure the liberties of the people. Turning to the existing crisis, he asked who were the men about to fill the places of the Ministry which had been so 'insultingly dismissed.' They were the Tories who had voted, struggled, and intrigued against every measure of Reform that had been proposed up to the present moment. They had two rallying cries, and the first of them was 'The Church is in danger.' If by 'The Church' they meant clerical sinecures, pluralities, non-residence, and the disgraceful inequalities which existed in the payment of the working clergy, then he was free to confess that the Church was in danger—great, serious, imminent danger (loud cheers). But if by the word 'Church' they meant real religion, the doctrines of the Protestant Faith, and the maintenance of the true and working ministers of religion, the Church, in his view, was never in less danger.

Their other cry was 'The Monarchy is in danger.' He was at loss to discover from what quarter. 'I look around to the north, south, east and west, and I have never been able to hear a word uttered bearing the semblance of a shadow of an objection to monarchical institutions. I never heard anything approaching to a demand for republican institutions, and wisely, in my opinion, convinced as I am that a constitutional monarchy affords the best security for liberty. Neither the Crown nor the Church is in danger, but I will tell you what is in danger: it is the Oligarchy.' (Great cheering.) 'In the days of George III. and George IV., the Sovereign of this country was entirely in the hands of a

faction. He was in fact a mere puppet to be moved according to their wishes; and all power and all honours were wielded entirely for the benefit of the faction itself. The Reform Bill, they saw, gave them a death-blow, and now they are about to try a last struggle to regain that power which is wrested from them. They have pitched upon a great military commander—the Duke of Wellington—who is to come forward and arrest the progress of that Reform, under whose exterminating hand Corporation abuses, Church abuses, and all other abuses in the institutions of the country were about to be swept away. I confess to you that he will find it to have been much easier to take Badajos and Ciudad Rodrigo, than to retake the liberties and independence of the people.

'Gentlemen, I have alluded to the rallying cries of the enemy. May I venture to tell you what ought to be ours. Let ours be "Reform, Liberty, and the Constitution." Let us form associations in every town and every village of the Empire. We have against us the Court and the Peers, but we have for us the Commons and the people. Whenever the struggle shall take place between two such opposing powers, it requires little foresight to see upon what side success will attend.'

Lord Durham predicted that the Tories might probably take a leaf out of the Liberal book. He thought that they might secure majorities in the counties because of what he described as the 'unfortunate 50*l.* tenant-at-will Clause' of the Reform Act, and he asserted that some of the scheduled thirteen towns in that measure had become, in consequence of the non-payment of rates, little better than rotten boroughs; but he had no fear of reaction, and he made it plain that he regarded the Reform Act—not as some of the Whigs described it, as spelling finality—but only as a 'means to an end.' In his closing words he alluded to the young Princess

Victoria as the 'hope of the country,' and before sitting down proposed as a toast 'Union amongst all Reformers.'

Durham's Newcastle speech was not at all to the mind of the official Whig leaders. Lord Grey, notably, did not relish so bold a manifesto. Lord Melbourne and Lord Palmerston were at the best lukewarm, and inclined to resent, as unauthorised, the Newcastle programme; even Lord John Russell, whilst zealous for the abolition of municipal abuses, seemed to think that the Reform Act was a final settlement of a great constitutional question. All of them—a view which their satellites endorsed with added warmth—thought that Durham, to borrow a sporting phrase, was forcing the pace, and if there was one thing that the Whigs believed in more than another, it was that political progress should advance at their bidding.

Durham, it must be admitted, did himself harm in such a quarter by his outspoken, perfervid harangues, and when the Whigs came back to power in the spring of 1835 he was left out in the cold, in spite of his ascendency in the country. Melbourne distrusted him, Palmerston disliked him, and Grey, who was consulted on the formation of the new Cabinet, shook his head. The consequence was, the most fearless and brilliant man of Cabinet rank at that period got the cold shoulder, because, forsooth, he was altogether too candid and far in front of his times. This was the more unpardonable since Durham, more than anyone else, by the enthusiasm which his speeches had aroused in the country, had brought the Liberals back to power.

Durham has left his own impressions of what happened at Newcastle in a letter to Parkes, written on the day after the banquet:

'Lambton Castle: November 20, 1834.

'Dear Parkes,—You will see that I have "put the steam on" in this part of the world. The machinery is

in good order, and we can go fifteen knots an hour against a Duke-wind. There was a great gathering of the workmen in the streets—music, banners, &c., but I was so unwell the day before that I did not dare encounter the procession, out-of-door speaking, &c., so came into Newcastle the evening before. They bore the disappointment very good-humouredly. I said two sentences to them from the inn window and they quietly dispersed. You will observe that my tone to the burgesses was different to that used to the operatives. The latter required calming, the former stimulating. The best and most determined feeling prevailed at the dinner. I declared for an amnesty for all differences of opinion, and called for union, &c., &c. The King was partially hissed, the Queen hooted, and the Princess Victoria "brought the roof down."

'I am very tired and ill, so adieu.

'Yours,

'DURHAM.'

The first letter put into his hands on his return to Lambton was sufficiently diverting. It was written by that amazing young person, Disraeli the Younger, who was still halting between two opinions. He had not yet quarrelled with O'Connell and, wonderful to relate, was at the moment contesting High Wycombe under the auspices of the 'Liberator' and that austere economist, Joseph Hume. Disraeli at this stage of his career was a cool, audacious critic of both Whigs and Tories, but his allegiance to Lord Durham, and all that he represented as between them, was destined to be short-lived. His letter has hitherto remained in ambush, but the late Lord Rowton, with a fine sense of humour, consented to its publication here :—

'Bradenham House, High Wycombe: Monday, November 17.

'My dear Lord Durham,—My electioneering prospects look gloomy. The squires throughout my own

county look grim at a Radical, and the Liberal interest is split and pre-engaged in our few towns, that I fear I shall fail. At present I am looking after Aylesbury, where young Hobhouse was beat last time, and will be beat this, if he try, but where, with my local influence, your party would succeed. If you have influence with Hobhouse, counsel him to resign in my favour, and not of another person, as 'tis rumoured he will. At the same time if Nugent return, he will beat us all. So my dear Lord, my affairs are black; therefore, remember me and serve me if you can. My principles you are acquainted with; as for my other qualifications, I am considered a great popular orator.

'What do you think of the Tories! at a moment when decision and energy would be pearls and diamonds to them, they have formed a Provisional Government! "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the—Lords." Such is Wellington's solitary cry; a Baptist worthy of such a Messiah as—Peel.

'In great haste,
'Dear Lord Durham,
'Your faithful,
'BENJ. DISRAELI.'

Durham by this time cherished no illusions with regard to Disraeli as a Radical.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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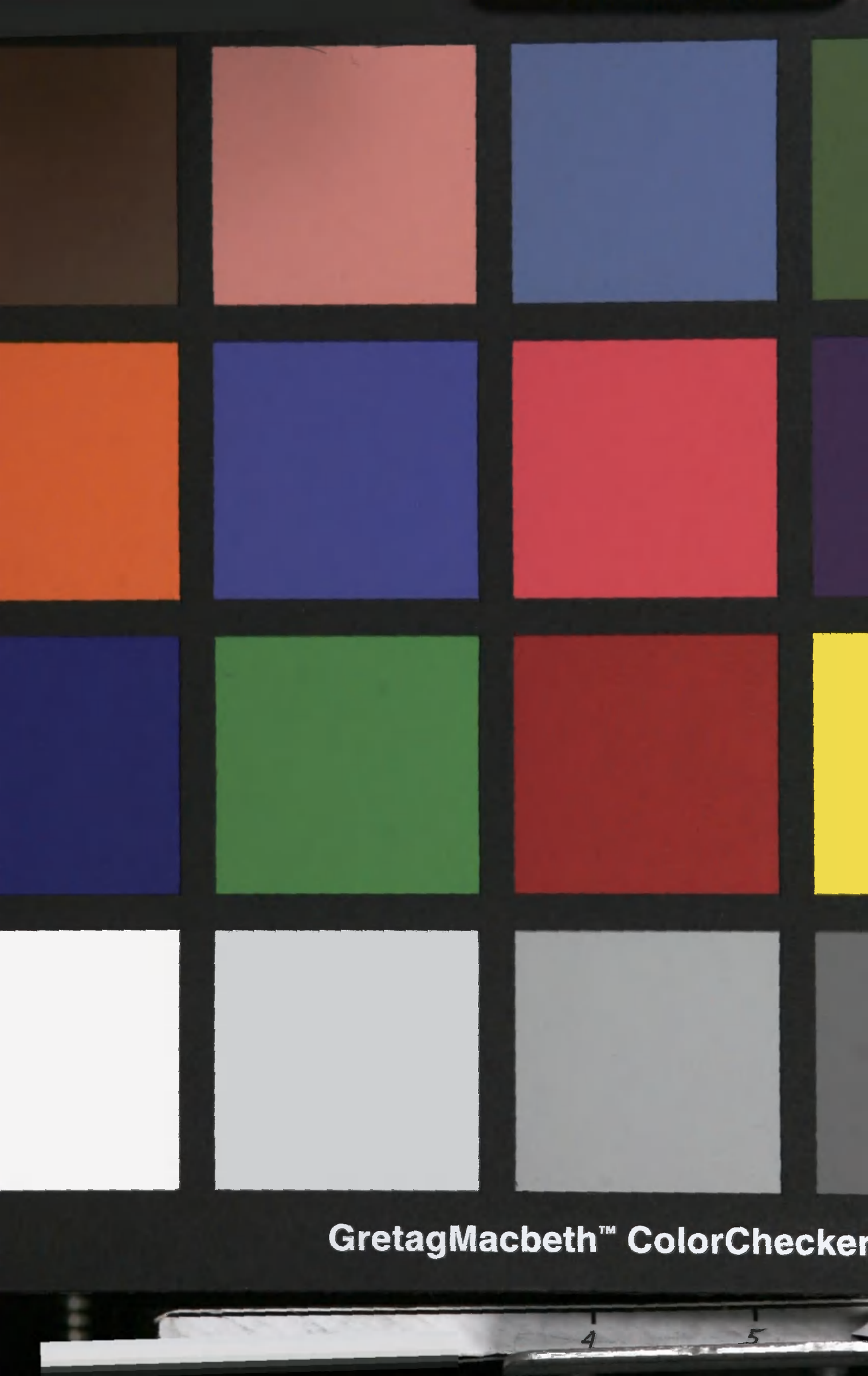
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